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Maestría en Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada

“The Use of Drama-Oriented Activities to Improve Oral Fluency in an EFL  
Classroom at Politécnica Salesiana University.”

Tesis previa a la obtención del  
Título de Magíster en Lengua  
Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada

Autor: Lic. Andrea Belén Chérrez Sacoto

C.I. 0105285753

Director: Mgst. Agnes Orosz

C.I.1750685305

CUENCA-ECUADOR

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## Resumen

El propósito de este estudio es validar la implementación de actividades basadas en el uso del Drama o Teatro en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero, es este caso el inglés. El estudio se llevó a cabo con estudiantes de segundo nivel de inglés de la Universidad Politécnica Salesiana. Este proyecto de investigación buscó dar respuesta a la hipótesis: La implementación de actividades basadas en el uso del Drama o Teatro tales como juegos de teatro, dramatizaciones o juego de roles, diálogos y la creación de un video corto en la enseñanza del idioma extranjero (inglés), mejorará la fluidez oral de los estudiantes. Para la recolección de datos se utilizó un pre- y post-oral test para medir la fluidez de los participantes en el cual se analizó los resultados del grupo experimental en comparación con los del grupo control. En base a los resultados de esta investigación, se puede concluir que el uso de actividades basadas en el Drama o Teatro en la enseñanza del idioma Inglés, puede mejorar las habilidades orales de los estudiantes, específicamente su fluidez. Los resultados del post-test demostraron que los estudiantes del grupo experimental mejoraron su fluidez considerablemente en comparación con los del grupo control. Para futuros estudios, se recomienda investigar el uso de actividades basadas en el Drama o Teatro por un periodo más extenso a fin de obtener mejores resultados.

**Palabras claves:** Actividades basadas en el Drama, Teatro, Juego de roles, Diálogos, Fluidez.

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to validate the implementation of drama-oriented activities in the process of teaching and learning of a foreign language, in this case English. The study was conducted with students coursing level 2 of General English at Politécnica Salesiana University. This research project sought to answer the hypothesis: can the implementation of drama-oriented activities such as drama games, role play, dialogues and the creation of a short video in an EFL classroom improve students' fluency?. For data collection, a pre-and post-oral test was used in order to measure participants' fluency in which the results of the experimental group was analyzed in comparison to the ones of the control group. Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that the use of drama-oriented activities in an EFL classroom can improve oral skills of students, specifically their fluency. The results of the post-test showed that students in the experimental group improved their fluency considerably compared to the control group. For future studies, it is recommended to investigate the use of drama-oriented activities for a longer period in order to obtain better results.

**Key words:** Drama-oriented activities, role play, dialogues, fluency.



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C.I.: 01052857553



## **Acknowledgments and Dedication**

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## **Background and Justification**

Nowadays, English is considered a global language, and it is recognized as a lingua franca which is defined by Seidlhofer as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often the only option” (qtd. in Björkman 1). Today, English is used as a lingua franca in a great number of communicative and working situations, in several settings and for different purposes, for instance, in business, technology, science, medicine, tourism, academia and diplomacy among others (Björkman 1-2). The necessity for good communication skills in English is increasing all the time. This has created a huge demand for quality English teaching and teaching materials and resources worldwide. English is used in multiple workplaces where employers require their employees to have good English language skills, and fluency in English is essential for people to succeed and advance in many employment situations as well as academic and professional fields (Richards 1).

In this context, the demand for an appropriate teaching methodology has become stronger than ever. Managing English is crucial for our learners in order to perform in any of the settings mentioned above. However, the knowledge of grammar structure and vocabulary is not enough for students. They need to be competent in the language, and one way to achieve this competence is by becoming fluent speakers of English.

Most students at ‘Politécnica Salesiana’ University are required to take six English levels, and need to prove their language knowledge and proficiency at the end of their majors; however, most of them have shown a poor level





especially regarding communicative skills; fluency specifically. This is the main reason why, the researcher considered more investigation was needed in this field.

It is a well-known fact that in our Ecuadorian schools, most students lack exposure to native speakers and authentic situations outside the classroom; the only opportunities they have to practice and learn English are in their classes. Another important well known issue is that even though our students have taken regular English classes for twelve years as part of their curriculum during primary as well as high school, many of them do not demonstrate a good English level or are not able to communicate or use the language fluently in real situations. In fact, according to research carried out by the Ecuadorian government, the average score in English proficiency is 13/20 in high schools. According to the 2011 Ranking by Education First, Ecuador is in the 37<sup>th</sup> place out of 42 countries. Something that shows Ecuador has a very low English level (ecuadorinmediato).

The students belonging to all English Levels at 'Politécnica Salesiana' University also show poor language skills. Most of them are not able to hold a conversation with native speakers or use the language orally in real situations. This may happen due to different factors. Among these factors, probably fluency plays an important role.

For these reasons, the major necessity in our Ecuadorian schools is to enable our students to communicate in the second language. That is why, the aim of this work is focused on improving students' oral skills especially fluency by providing them drama-oriented activities to be used in class as an alternative



which attempts to create not only a cheerful and comfortable classroom environment but also to foster oral fluency skills by creating a suitable context.

Another important reason to carry out this investigation is that the findings of the literature review on drama-oriented activities to improve oral fluency show that, in fact, the use of these types of activities can help students develop their speaking skills and improve their oral fluency (Wessels 9).

As stated above, Ecuadorian students learning English as well as the participants of this study need to improve their English and become more fluent. This research aims to demonstrate that by being exposed to drama-oriented activities, Ecuadorian English students can quantifiably improve their oral fluency.

## Introduction

English language teaching has undergone many changes throughout history. Many researchers around the world have investigated several methods to facilitate the English teaching and learning process. According to Richards, the trends in language teaching are divided into three phases: the classic language teaching, the communicative language teaching, and the current communicative language teaching (6-21). The focus of this research has to do with the last of these phases.

This experimental-qualitative-interpretive research (Embleton 20) is concerned with the extent to which the application of interactive drama oriented activities can improve students' oral fluency. The participants involved were a group of 26 students coursing English level 2 at the English Language Institute at Politécnica Salesiana University. This group were studying a variety of Degree Courses at the Institution. The convenience sample consisted of two groups: a control group which did not receive the treatment, and an experimental group which was exposed to several drama-oriented activities. This was done in order to analyze how much learners from the experimental group improved their oral fluency skills in contrast with the control group.

The instruments used for data collection were a pre-test and a post-test based on a personal interview with students about on familiar topics, and a small interaction carried out in pairs using prompt cards. While taking the pre and post-test, participants were audio recorded in order to have evidence of their performance and to be used/evaluated as further reference to analyze their progress at the end of the project. During the application of the treatment,



students performed different drama-oriented activities such as dialogues, role plays, and the creation and video taping of their own short film. Finally, a post-test was administrated at the end of the treatment in order to analyze students' progress regarding oral fluency. The post-test had the same structure of the test given to participants at the beginning of the research (pre-test).

The main chapters of this thesis are as follows: Chapter I contains the Literature Review, where the main concepts regarding fluency and drama-oriented activities as well as studies on these topics are discussed and described. Chapter II describes the methodology used for data collection as well as the application of the activities. In Chapter III, the results and main findings of the study are presented, analyzed, and interpreted. Finally, Chapter IV contains the conclusions arrived at as well as some constrains encountered and recommendations for classroom practice and future research on the use of drama-oriented activities to improve oral fluency in our Ecuadorian context.

## STUDY DESIGN

### Problem Statement

As English teachers, at the University, we are usually concerned about students who cannot speak or express themselves fluently in L2 in spite of our effort to help them achieve this skill. Finding ways and resources to help our students improve their oral fluency is one of the biggest challenges we face, especially in countries like ours where learners share the same mother tongue and lack of exposure to the second language outside the classroom. There are several activities that we use in our classroom with the aim of having our students master or at least improve their fluency such as pair and group work communicative tasks; however, as Bresnihan & Stoops state, these activities in the way they are structured in an English learning classroom are usually ineffective or do not fulfill the expectations teachers have (qtd in Al-Sibai et al. 2). What Bresnihan & Stoops state is not something new for us, since most teachers have realized during our classes that students do not perform communicative tasks in the way they are meant to be. Instead, they often switch to their native language and chat using Spanish, something that for us teachers is difficult to control due to the large classes we teach in our Ecuadorian schools. In this context, Schneider recommends making students communicate only using English, thus the focus will be completely on fluency. He also says that students have acquired an extensive knowledge of grammar structures and vocabulary during all their years as learners with a sensation of disappointment towards the language (qtd. in Al-Sibai et al. 2-3). In this context, it is important to



provide students meaningful and motivating material to encourage them to speak and improve their oral fluency. Therefore, the research aimed at finding answers to the following questions:

### **Research Questions**

1. To what degree does the application of drama-oriented activities help students improve their oral fluency skills?
2. What benefits do the participants obtain from the use of drama-oriented activities in the classroom regarding oral fluency skills?

#### **2.1. General Objective**

- Using drama-oriented activities to improve oral fluency in an EFL classroom.

#### **2.2. Specific Objectives**

- Measuring quantifiable improvement in oral fluency as a result of drama-oriented activities.
- Giving an account of the students' perceptions regarding their improvement in fluency as a result of the treatment.

The present research project involved both quantitative and qualitative elements.

### **Hypothesis statement**

The use of drama-oriented activities such as drama games, role plays, dialogues and a short film creation in an EFL classroom will improve students' oral fluency skills.

*Independent variable:* The use of drama-oriented activities with beginner university students in an EFL class.

*Dependent variable:* Improvement of oral fluency.

## **Research Methodology**

This is an experimental-qualitative-interpretive type of research, which as stated by Embleton, aims to research the reactions of a group of students to a new teaching methodology, compared with those of a similar group not exposed to that methodology (20). This study attempts to give a meaningful alternative to improve oral fluency skills of students from 'Politécnica Salesiana' University. The intervention consisted of providing students with drama-oriented activities in order to have them practice and use the language in meaningful and interactive contexts and situations. This alternative arose due to the lack of language opportunities for students to practice within the classroom. In the study, two groups were part of the research: an experimental group that was exposed to the drama-oriented activities in the class and the control group that did not receive any treatment.

## **Operationalization of the Research**

The Independent Variable: "The use of drama-oriented activities in the classroom" was measured by the number of drama games, dialogues and role plays given to the students. The participants participated in twenty-four activities during the process: eleven role plays, eight dialogues and four drama games and the creation of a short film. The role plays were based on the topics that the participants had in their textbook *Top Notch 1* and *2* (Saslow et al., 2011). The

drama games were provided by the teacher, whereas the dialogues, role plays and the final short film were created by the students based on given topics related to learners' lives or context they are likely to face outside the classroom.

The Dependent Variable: "The development of students' fluency" was tested by using an oral pre- and post-test. To grade students' performance on these tests, a speaking rubric based on 5 parameters was used. These 5 aspects were developed from the literature review on fluency definitions and measurements which included the following: smoothness, pace (Schmidt, qtd. in Chenoweth 81), coherence (Fillmore, qtd. in Campbell 58), mistranslations, and resort to L1 (Campbell 58).

### **Delimitation of the Research**

This research was carried out during a period of 5 months approximately involving two classes as convenience samples as the researcher was teaching them and also their profile was comparable. Participants of each group received 3 hours of classes a week during 20 weeks, which gave the researcher 60 hours to work on the intervention in the treatment group, while the control group received their ordinary English classes as prescribed by the syllabus. All participants came from a private university in Cuenca-Ecuador: Politécnica Salesiana University. The treatment group was formed of 26 beginning English level students, 5 female and 21 male, whose ages ranged from 18 to 23 years old. The control group also consisted of 26 students with 6 female and 19 male students. The application took place between March and July, 2013 at the institution mentioned above.





## **CHAPTER I**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **1. Introduction**

This literature review will cover the most important aspects regarding fluency such as its major definitions, the difference among different types of fluency, and important concepts about spoken fluency. Moreover, a debate around the concept of fluency will be presented in order to have a broad panorama of what it involves. It is important to mention that the term 'fluency' is not only used in second language learning but also in language 1, that is why a distinction between fluency in L1 and in L2 will be established in order to find out how similar or different they are. In the same way, the term 'speaking skills' is usually used in second language acquisition which can be easily associated with fluency; however, it is important to remark that they are not the same, so this section will also establish a difference between these terms. Finally, the last section regarding fluency will cover experiments and findings regarding fluency as well as suggestions from different authors about the best ways to measure it. It is important to emphasize that the terms 'oral fluency' and 'speaking fluency' will be used interchangeably along this review. Regarding drama-oriented activities, the concepts of drama and role play will be discussed as well as findings of research carried out to investigate the benefits obtained from the use of these types of activities in an EFL classroom.



## 2. What is fluency?

Many people talk about fluency and use this term frequently in spite of not really knowing its actual meaning or all the concepts it implies. For instance, we can say that a person speaks a certain language fluently since we notice this person uses the language in a comfortable, easy and quick way (Binder et al. 2). In our daily life, for example, we usually refer to an athlete, actor or singer as fluent when he or she performs easily and accurately, making the right moves without hesitation or major problems; we say they perform not only with accuracy but also with speed. Wood says that the term fluency is frequently used as a synonym for effective spoken use of a language or to mean “native-like” (9). In other words, speakers who have a high overall degree of proficiency or as good a command of the language (Wood 9) as a native speaker has. In this context, we can also say that a second language learner is fluent by referring to his or her ability to perform and use the language smoothly and accurately (Binder et al. 2).

By bringing this general idea of fluency into second language acquisition, it can be said that achieving fluency is one of the main goals for second language learners. In fact, fluency can be considered one of the most important objectives for the followers of the communicative methodology: social communication / interaction is the major living function of a language while fluency is the goal (Guillot 1). It can be said then that fluency is considered an important characteristic of foreign language speech outcomes, and it is also often evaluated in major language tests, such as the TOEFL proficiency test which assesses the practical command of English as a tool for communication. However, as Chambers states, despite the frequent use of the terms “fluency” and “fluent” in language pedagogy and testing, and daily life situations, there seem to be no clear definitions concerning these concepts (qtd. in Kormos and Dénes 2).



In this context, Hieke concludes that “the literature on fluency reveals it to be replete with vacuous definitions” (qtd. in McCarthy 13). Brumfit reaffirms this idea by stating that the concept of fluency is difficult to define in comprehensive terms even though it is a term which has been used with much frequency (53). Campbell also states that fluency appears to be a multi-component concept rather than a single one (58). Finally, Thornbury and Hedge describe fluency as the ability to speak a language idiomatically, accurately and properly to a context with facility and without inappropriate slowness or undue pauses (Thornbury 82, Hedge 54). As noticed in these accounts, there seem to be many definitions of fluency; however, it is necessary to sum up these previous definitions and interpretations in order to help us map the landscape within which fluency will be discussed in this study. Thus, the definition that fluency is the ability of the speaker or learner to produce the language easily, accurately and smoothly with no hesitations or long pauses will be used in this study.

In addition, another important aspect concerning fluency is not only how to define it, but also how to measure it; an issue that has prompted a lot of debate among different authors as (qtd. in Kormos and Dénes 2).

Further in this section, more definitions and measures of fluency will be analyzed.

## **2.1 Distinguishing among different types of fluency**

The term fluency is not used exclusively to refer to oral performance. This term is also used to refer to reading and writing as well. The accounts defining fluency given in the previous section referred to fluency in a general way without making any distinction among these types of fluency. For this reason, in this section, specific definitions of oral or spoken fluency will be presented.



### **2.1.1 Concepts and definitions of spoken or oral fluency**

Coming to an exact or final definition of fluency has been a matter of controversy. In studies of spoken fluency, the most common used criterion to define fluency is rate of production. However, according to Fillmore there are four additional aspects that are used to describe fluent language production: one has to do with pauses, the other with coherence, the third one with appropriateness and the final one with creativity and imaginativeness in using the language (qtd. in Brown 1 and Kormos and Dénes 3). In addition, Kopenen & Riggensbach state that speaking fluency in a general sense has to do with semantic density, sociolinguistic appropriateness, and creativity in language use, something that coincides with some of the abilities Fillmore proposes (qtd. in Richter 3). These additional criteria help to distinguish between fluency (defined by rate) and proficiency (defined by rate and the additional criteria). In addition, Schmidt makes a distinction between global language proficiency which can be defined as speaking fluently or speaking well and the concept of fluency as “the processing of language in real time”. Thus Schmidt proposes speed and ease of processing as possible characteristics of fluent language (qtd. in Chenoweth 81).

McCarthy states that in a number of Romance languages, the equivalent word for “fluent” is typically based on a metaphor of “flow” or “smooth delivery” (12). Brown cites Hartmann and Stork, who suggest that “a person is said to be a fluent speaker of a language when he can use its structures accurately while concentrating on content rather than form, using the units and patterns automatically at normal conversational speed when they are needed”(1). This is to say that the speaker performs with the suitable combination of accuracy and speed (or, in others words, quality plus pace). Thus fluency has not only to do with simple accuracy but it also includes the pace, or speed of the



language performance (Binder et al. 1). These concepts coincide with the previous accounts from Thornbury and Hedge described above.

Guillot provides a summary of the various viewpoints in her book “Fluency and its Teaching” (4-5). By drawing on Chomsky’s definition of linguistic competence Leeson defines fluency as: “the ability of the speaker to produce indefinitely many sentences conforming to the phonological, syntactical and semantic exigencies of a given natural language, on the basis of a finite exposure to a finite corpus of that language” (qtd. in Guillot 4). For Brumfit, fluency is “to be regarded as natural language use, whether or not it results in native-speaker-like language comprehension or production... seen as the maximally effective operation of the language system so far acquired by the student” (4).

There is a perceptible contrast between these two accounts. While, Leeson’s main concern regards linguistic features, Brumfit deals with methodology, and conditions for promoting the emergence of fluency in the classroom (qtd. in Guillot 4).

Considering these aspects, Fillmore is more explicit about the qualities associated with fluency and conceptualized fluency and describes it as the capacity of performing four main skills:

1. Talk at length with few pauses and fill time with talk (to talk without awkward pauses for a relatively long time).
2. Talk in a coherent and reasoned manner.
3. Have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts.
4. Be creative and imaginative in using the language (Campbell 58).

Fillmore as well as Brown also address the range of other components that form part of the concept of fluency. For instance speaking speed, length of utterances, smoothness, the use of small words, discourse competency, back channeling devices



among others which are elements in a speaker's output that “may be referred to as fluency markers”(qtd. in Campbell 58).

However, just as there are fluency markers, there are also disfluency markers. In order to refer to the lack of fluency, people commonly use the term non-fluency; however, Campbell refers to it by using the term disfluency which suggests “the lack of certain elements in the speaker's performance” which are defined as disfluency markers. Among these disfluency markers we can find features such as extremely slow speaking, frequent unconscious resort to L1 vocabulary or use of L1 fillers and discourse markers lacking of proficiency, mistranslated and over-applied back channeling phrases such as “Is that so?”, or poorly formed discourse as shown in the statement “Finished” to express a conclusion to a speech. In summary, fluency involves both fluency markers and disfluency markers which may have a cumulative effect on judgments of fluency (58).

From these accounts defining fluency, five essential aspects were taken into account in order to meet the goals of this research and to grade participants' oral fluency during the pre- and post-test application. These aspects included three parameters that make reference to the abilities a fluent speaker should have according to Fillmore (qtd. in Campbell 58): 1) smoothness, 2) pace, and 3) coherence. The other 2 parameters have to do with disfluency markers 4) mistranslations and 5) resort to L1 (Campbell 58). These 5 parameters were included in the oral rubric to score fluency which will be explained in detailed in the next chapter.

## **2.2 Speaking Fluency in L1 and in L2**

Aiming to speak a language fluently is one of the ultimate goals for language learners; for this reason, several researchers have carried out a number of studies in order to find ways to improve it. As Chambers states, traditionally, fluency is seen as “broadly synonymous with language mastery and native-like performance” (qtd. in Götz 3).



Wood states that spoken performance in a second language is fundamentally “a function of a speaker’s pauses and hesitation both in temporal terms and in terms of their appropriate links with discourse pragmatics and structure” (9). Wood also agrees with Chamber’s statement when he says that generally, the term fluency is often used as a synonym for effective spoken use of a language or to mean “native-like,” having a high overall degree of proficiency, or having a “good command” of a language (9). In other words, what they mean is that in order to be a fluent speaker of a second language the learners should imitate a native speaker or speak as a ‘native speaker’ does. But how is a ‘native speaker’ defined?

Lennon states that “native speakers clearly differ among themselves in fluency, and, more particularly, any individual native speaker may be more or less fluent according to topic, interlocutor, situation, ‘noise’, stress, and other factors” (qtd. in Götz 6).

On the other hand, according to Davies a native speaker can be defined as outlined below:

1. The native speaker acquires his/her native language or L1 during childhood,
2. The native speaker is aware of the use of his/her language and grammar.
3. The native speaker is able to produce “fluent spontaneous discourse”, and shows a great “memory stock of complete lexical items”. The native speaker proves to have a huge communicative competence in both production and comprehension.
4. The native speaker has an exclusive aptitude to write creatively, including literature at all levels.
5. Finally, the native speaker has an exclusive aptitude to interpret and translate into his/her native language or L1 (210).



With these concepts in mind, Götz' study of fluency in native and nonnative speech tries to find out what exactly makes a difference between native speakers and nonnative learners even when the latter have obtained a high level of proficiency and have a high motivation to imitate native speaking or have lived abroad for much of the time (3). In her study the possible causes of the major differences are taken from Lennon who says that some fluency deficits may come from articulation, which seems to be more automatized in the primary language than in L2.

In addition, Götz also provides different variables to Lennon's concept of fluency in the "broad sense" which has to do with both the global impression of fluency as well as the overall oral proficiency in native and nonnative speech. Among these variables we can find that the speech rate may differ in different varieties of English, for instance, British English vs. American English, also speakers with different sociolinguistic background may be fluent in different ways. Finally, there are other factors including psycholinguistic aspects which might also contribute to Lennon's assumptions. In his book, Paikeday uses the term 'native speaker' to refer to "1) one identifiable individual who is considered a native speaker of a certain language, or 2) an abstract concept that serves as a model or norm for speech community" (6). However, Mukherjee says that these concepts were seen as idealistic since they only apply to monolingual speakers in a monolingual society (qtd. in Paikeday 6). Something that Davies agrees with when he states that the concept of "Native Speaker" can be considered a myth but a useful myth (214).

In this context, it can be suggested that these definitions of fluency making reference to "native-like" speech are unhelpful due to lack of clarity.

In Götz' study making a contrastive analysis between fifty German highly advanced learners of English and fifty British native speakers of the language, the findings show a difference between certain native speakers; while one group shows a high use of





formulaic language without the necessity of a high number of repeats, filled pauses or small words and fill upcoming fluency gaps with discourse markers, other native speakers show a smaller use of formulaic language, and use their favorite fluency enhancement strategies in relation with filled pauses and repeats. Nevertheless, other native speakers show a clear preference in their use of discourse markers, small words and repeats.

As opposed to this, non-native speakers or EFL learners show the use of either a comparatively high proportion of formulaic language or a high proportion of all the strategies and they thus clearly lack the degree of variation displayed by native speakers (138). The quantitative analysis of productive fluency revealed that none of the high-advanced learners' performance approximated to the native target norm. The learners had significantly poorer performances than the native speakers across all temporal fluency variables (speech rate, mean length of runs, filled pauses, unfilled pauses, etc. (170). Regarding the use of enhancing strategies, the learners deviate from the native speakers by "overusing hesitation phenomena and under-using a broad variety of discourse markers and smallwords as alternative fluency enhancing strategies that the native speakers have at their disposal" (170). In addition to these findings, a significant increase in the learners' temporal fluency performance after having lived abroad for a fair amount of time in an English-speaking country is found. Thus Götz' findings support Cobb's statement: "It appears that even advanced learners are unlikely to discover very quickly on their own all of the relevant features of a second language that make it "native-like" (139).

From this comparison between what fluency means in native speakers and non-native learners, it can be concluded that it is difficult even for advanced learners to produce a "native-like" speech and acquire the abilities a native speaker has to produce fluent language. This is commonly seen in my university classes where even the best students



at the highest levels are not able to show a “native-like” speech since they lack the essential features native speakers have such as the ability to produce the language spontaneously and accurately. Students do not easily acquire the strategies native people have to fill silences and pauses with small words or idiomatic expressions for example. In addition, some learners usually show a lack of communicative competence in both production and comprehension. For some of them, it is difficult not only to answer to a question orally but also to understand it.

## **2.3 Speaking skills and oral fluency**

### **2.3.1 What is speaking?**

When learning a second language, students have to learn four main skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, it seems that for most learners the hardest skill to achieve is speaking, and that is for two main reasons. First, speaking occurs in real time. Second, when you speak you cannot check or edit what you want to say as it happens in writing. Speaking is an oral productive skill which “consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning” (Bailey 48.)

Thornbury and Slade state that speaking might be defined as a social, multisensory speech event, whose topic is unpredictable. Speaking establishes connection and mutual agreement, maintains and modifies social identity, and involves interpersonal skills (17). This social element is expressed through wishes, feelings, attitudes, opinions and judgments, which can have conflicts with the formal nature of the classroom when teaching speaking (Nazara 30).

Burns & Joyce give another definition of speaking. They say that speaking is defined as “an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing,



receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, the participants, and the purposes of speaking” (qtd. in Torky 30).

Both of these definitions are valid in order to have an idea of what ‘speaking’ involves. Another important fact to consider is that in real life situations, much of the communication that takes place is oral, and for this oral communication to happen there are some necessary skills the speaker has to achieve in order to express him/herself intelligibly, reasonably accurately and fluently (Torky 72).

Torky provides other sub-competencies or skills based on the operational definition of speaking as “the secondary stages student’s ability to express themselves orally, coherently, fluently and appropriately in a given meaningful context to serve both transactional and interactional purposed using correct pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary and adopting the pragmatic and discourse rules of the spoken language” (72) . In other words, Torky says that speakers are required to show mastery of the following sub competences/ skills:

1. Linguistic competence:

- *Using intelligible pronunciation*
- *Following grammatical rules accurately*
- *Using relevant, adequate and appropriate range of vocabulary*

2. Discourse competence:

- *Structuring discourse coherently and cohesively*
- *Managing conversation and interacting effectively to keep the conversation going*

3. Pragmatic competence:

- *Expressing a range of functions effectively and appropriately according to the context and register*



4. Fluency: *This means speaking fluently demonstrating a reasonable rate of speech* (30-31).

As noticed above, fluency is considered a sub-skill of speaking performance. Besides the several definitions of fluency given above, from her perspective Klammer provides some additional constitutive components of fluency. Among the main components, she states that fluency means:

- taking part of “conversational matters” managing conversations effectively
- to avoid “communication breakdown” successfully, and to “express oneself within a reasonable amount of time”
- flexibility to avoid “uncomfortably long pauses and hesitations”
- ‘automatic skilled behavior’, and a spontaneous reaction to various demands of ‘real time’ conversation, and finally
- Fluency does not imply error-free production (103).

As described above, speaking a second language requires multiple skills and sub-skills in order to express oneself properly and, therefore, achieving fluency and its components are part of these important skills.

## **2.4 Measures of fluency**

Establishing the components and measurements of fluency implies the same difficulties as finding an accurate and standardized definition for fluency.

Many studies have tried to establish appropriate measures of fluency. In this attempt, linguistic research on L2 fluency has focused on the differentiation between fluent versus less fluent speech. Evidently, such a differentiation has been predominantly based on temporal qualities of spoken

performances (Segalowitz 29). According to Kormos and Dénes, three different approaches have been frequently used by researchers: 1) the development of fluency longitudinally, 2) a comparison between fluent and non-fluent speakers, and 3) correlated fluency scores with temporal variables. However the number of participants in most of these projects is very small, and these studies show a lack of statistical analyses and computer technology for identifying pauses reliably (Kormos and Dénes 6).

In order to summarize and complete the list of these and other common units of measurement, most researchers such as Segalowitz (6), Wood (14) and Klammer (9), and ND Jong (538) agree with Kormos and Dénes' conclusion of ten temporal variables as the most common predictors of fluency: 1) speech rate, 2) articulation rate, 3) Phonation-time ratio, 4) Mean length of runs, 5) the number of silent pauses per minute, 6) The mean length of pauses, 7) the number of filled pauses per minute, 8) the number of disfluencies per minute, 9) pace, 10) space.

Regarding study-abroad contexts, some research has been carried out in order to investigate whether or how fluency gain occurs in study abroad contexts by different researchers such as Freed, Riggenbach, Möhle and Segalowitz himself. Although most of the following studies involve the learning of a language other than English, these important studies examine the fluency learners gain in study abroad contexts and come to the conclusion that time spent studying L2 in a target language setting has a positive effect (Wood 13).

In his book, Wood describes and summarizes several studies which include the following: Segalowitz and Freed compared at home and study abroad groups in Spanish as a second language and found that the study abroad students made greater improvements in the temporal aspects of speech fluency; moreover, the amount of language contact, initial proficiency, and cognitive abilities played vital roles as well.



Evidence by Collentine also shows that study abroad experience in Spanish as a second language may facilitate greater gains in the ability to tell extended narratives and produce semantically dense language. (qtd. in Wood 14).

Möhle compared the spoken texts of German students of French and French students of Germané. The texts were analyzed by using four of the ten temporal variables suggested by Kormos and Dénes above:

- 1) Speech and articulation rate
- 2) Length and position of silent pauses
- 3) Length and quality of speech units and
- 4) Number; type, and position of hesitation phenomena in the text. (qtd. in Wood 14).

In his longitudinal study of the fluency development of a British student of French, Towell also used four temporal variables similar to those of Möhle:

- 1) Speaking rate
- 2) Articulation rate
- 3) Pause / time ratio and
- 4) Lengths of runs (qtd in Wood 15).

In Riegenbach's study of fluency development among Chinese EFL students, it was found that key temporal aspects of fluency correlated with perceived fluency as rated by native-speaker judges (13). This research was conducted with six Chinese students of English where a taped dialogue was analyzed for five fluency-related variables and judged by native speakers for global fluency. However, Riegenbach's choice of fluency variables differed slightly from those explained previously:

- 1) Hesitation phenomena
- 2) Repair phenomena



- 3) Rate and amount of speech
- 4) Interactive phenomena (by nonnative speaker) and
- 5) Interactive features (qtd. in Wood 16).

Finally, in a similar study by Freed investigating the effect of fluency on American students of French learners living a term abroad, it was found that the main temporal aspects of fluency all showed that the term-abroad group who spent one semester in France, had a better improvement in comparison to a control group who remained in the United States (13-14). This study examined 30 native English-speaking students of French, and had native speakers globally rate their fluency. In her analysis of fluency-related features, Freed focused on seven points:

- 1) Amount of speech
- 2) Rate of speech
- 3) Unfilled pauses
- 4) Filled pauses
- 5) Length of fluent runs between pauses
- 6) Repairs and
- 7) Clusters of disfluencies (qtd. in Wood 17).

As seen above, most researchers seem to agree that the most important variables regarding the temporal aspects of measuring fluency are the following: amount of speech produced, rate of speech, repairs, pauses, and the length of runs between pauses.

Although, some of these studies focus on study abroad situations, they are useful to note that immersion works for fluency.



### **3. The use of drama-oriented activities in promoting speaking abilities and oral fluency**

#### **3.1 Definition of drama**

Drama can be defined in different ways. In a broad sense, Hubbard perceives drama as “a wide range of oral activities that have an element of creativity present” (qtd. in Davies 87). Holden states that drama is any kind of activity where learners interpret themselves or someone else in an imaginary situation; “drama is concerned with the world of ‘let’s pretend’” (1). Heathcote agrees with this concept and adds that “drama is any action or situation in which we get involved taking an active role and where the main concern is the attitude rather than the character we create” (qtd. in Kaladias 445).

#### **3.2 What is it meant by drama-oriented activities?**

Drama- oriented activities make reference to those activities that allow students to use their own personality to create and work on the material containing part of the language that is to be used in the class. These activities are not only based on the capacity every person has to imitate, mimic and express himself or herself by means of gesture but also draw on the students’ imagination and memory. These activities enable learners to use their natural ability to bring to life parts of their past experience that with regular activities might not appear (Maley and Duff 6).

According to Maley and Duff, they are dramatic because they stimulate our interest by “drawing on the unpredictable power generated when one person is brought together with others” (6). In these activities, each student adds aspects of his/her life and background to the class (6).

It is important to remark what it is not meant by dramatic activities. The purpose of this research is not putting on plays in front of a passive audience but having students create





and build their own material based on drama. This conception agrees with Maley and Duff statement that the use of dialogues and short sketches with rigid and self-conscious 'dramatization' as sometimes produced for distraction or language reinforcement is not what is wanted for this project. Other people's words, which have been mechanically memorized, "can turn to ashes in the speaker's mouth. They lose their flavor even before they are spoken" (6), and that is something that we do not want.

When using drama-oriented activities, students do not have to feel that they are being prepared for a huge final performance. The value of these activities does not have to do with what they lead up to but with what they bring out right now (Maley and Duff 6). So this means that there is not an audience in mind other than the people who are taking part. For example one group can perform for another or even one group for all the others, if it is necessary (6).

In this context, drama-oriented activities are used to enhance imagination and energy, something that is sometimes hard to do in language teaching. Drama-oriented activities include play-reading, recitation, improvisation, and acting out dialogues, sketches, or scenes from a play written by students themselves or by someone else, role play, mime, pantomime etc. However, in order to meet the main goals of this research the drama-oriented activities used during this process include: drama games, dialogues, role play and the creation of a short film or video. Drama activities also include improvisation, which I consider is a key element present in the development of each of the former drama activities.

### **3.2.1 Drama games:**

According to Wessels, drama games refer to activities that involve four important aspects: action, imagination, learning, and expression of emotions (29-30).



1. A drama game involves action: They are rarely static. These activities imply movement and action around the whole classroom. They enable learners to walk around the room, investigate physical features and each other, to communicate, and even touch each other momentarily.
2. A drama game exercises the imagination: It means that learners are called upon to invent new situations or take existing ones and modify them with their own ideas, and to allow “the dreams of their minds to flower into speech or action”.
3. A drama game involves learning: In contrast with structure games which are focused on specific grammar structures learned in class, drama games generally practices far more language than just the core structure.
4. A drama game allows the expression of emotion, linguistically and paralinguistically: To represent different situations or people, learners are given the freedom to express a great number of emotions, not only in speech, but also through facial expression and gestures.

These are the four components that characterized drama games and make them different from other language games. These features give drama games “far wider scope and appeal than normal ‘structure games’ (Wessels 30).

### **3.2.2 Dialogue:**

According to Thornbury, dialogue in language learning, “is either the text of a usually two-way spoken exchange, or it is the activity of having such exchange” (64). The use of dialogues to present and practice language has been very popular in the classroom since dialogue is the most common and widespread way that spoken language is used in real life (64).

The use of dialogues has undergone some variations during the history of language teaching. Some dialogues provided by textbooks, for example, have been memorized by



students. During the grammar-translation period, the use of dialogues was neglected. In the audiolingual approach, dialogues were commonly used in a structural graded form to start each lesson and they were exhaustively drilled. Currently, most coursebooks provide less structured and less strictly graded dialogues, and contain more natural examples of how language is used in real life. In addition, nowadays dialogues are not memorized and drilled as much as they were before. In contrast, this practice has been replaced with different other activities such as listening to recorded dialogues or watching them on videos, reading dialogues aloud in pairs, among others, and principally something that concerns with the objectives of this project is dialogue building, which means the construction of a dialogue around prompts supplied by the teacher (Thornbury 64).

### **3.2.3 Role Play:**

Role play involves the adoption of another person (Thornbury 70), as when students pretend to be a famous person, or a doctor, etc. On the other hand, in a simulation, learners 'play' themselves in a simulated situation (70); for example they might pretend they are meeting an old friend at a party or inviting a friend to the movies. This research focused on the use of role play mainly to improve speaking abilities, fluency essentially in the classroom. For this reason a more exhaustive literature on role play is found further in this section.

### **3.2.4 Video:**

Nowadays, the widespread use of technology enables teachers to use videos in different ways and for different purposes. According to Wessels, besides filming students for feedback, video can be useful for drama in language teaching in 4 essential ways:

1. Students can create their own script for a documentary or drama. Then, they film it themselves, after receiving instructions on how to use the equipment if there is any



available. The students could film inside or outside the school. In the last case, it would imply a complete project, which needs to be developed by students with time. This is the kind of activity in which video was used for this project.

2. After watching a short scene from a play, with the sound off, students then improvise the dialogue, and finally compare and contrast their dialogues with the original one.
3. After students watch a newsreader reading a news summary, they are given copies of the new, and asked to mimic the newsreader using facial expressions, mannerism, and gestures. Then a winner is chosen based on the best performance, and the class then discuss why she or he was more successful than the others.
4. The student can create a pop video to accompany a pop song, an activity that works on the principles of improvisation and creativity (Wessels 91-92).

### **3.2.5 Improvisation:**

Landy defines improvisation as a play without a script. It is an unscripted, unrehearsed and spontaneous performance where minimal directions of a teacher are present. When learners improvise, they include their own statements reflecting their personality and background (qtd. in Chukueggu 8).

According to Davies, there are two types of improvisation: the spontaneous improvisation and the prepared improvisation. In the spontaneous improvisation the teacher starts an open-ended process by providing the learners with a situation and challenging them to respond to it. There are no instructions on what to do. In contrast, in the prepared improvisation, a topic or situation is chosen by the teacher and the students. Learners work on the situation by organizing and creating ideas. Groups are formed in order to practice the segments of the improvisation, and after a short time, a presentation is performed (qtd. in Chukueggu 8).



### **3.3 Benefits of drama**

The use of drama can provide several benefits in speaking development. According to Wessels, the main aim of drama is “getting students to speak”. This happens since drama creates the need to speak by directing learner’s attention to creating dramatic situations, dialogues, role plays, or problem solving exercises (9). Mattevi and Makita-Discekici say that the use of drama in an English classroom besides providing an opportunity for teachers to teach the language actively and communicatively, it also enables them to create realistic situations in which the learners can learn to use the target language in context (qtd. in Janudom et al. 4). In addition, Taylor states that drama techniques imply a lot of fun, and it can create motivation, enhance confidence, and provide context in learning a language (1-2). All these accounts contribute to the benefits of drama in enhancing learners’ speaking abilities. However, besides these benefits regarding speaking abilities, drama can be useful in building individual skills for students (Kalidas 446).

In addition, some authors including Erdman, Gill, and O’Gara state that vocabulary and grammar develop through the use of drama in the enacted situations (qtd. in Gill 30). There is also cooperative learning involving groups. According to Long and Porter, the effectiveness of group work is higher than the one of traditional methodology since by having students work in group increases talking time in class. Long and Porter estimate that in an EFL class of 30 students, speaking time for each learner “averages out to just one hour per year in a traditional system, but increases by more than 500 per cent where learning is group-work based” (qtd. in Gill 30). Similarly, Kagan suggest that “an interactive session in class result in more language output in two minutes than in a non-interactive one in an hour” (qtd. in Gill 30). In this context, Davies, Genesee and Long &



Porter add by saying that “drama allows learners to participate in wide-ranging oral interaction with a variety of language forms” (qtd. in Gill 31).

### **3.4 Role Play**

An essential drama-oriented activity used during this work in order to meet the benefits mentioned above was role play, which is analyzed in this section in detail.

#### **3.4.1 Definition of role play**

An essential drama-oriented activity used during this work in order to meet the benefits mentioned above was role play, which is analyzed in this section in detail.

Role play is defined by Livingstone as a classroom activity which provides the students with the opportunity to practice the language they may need outside the classroom (qtd. in Al-Senaidi et al 66). In addition, Yardley defines role play as a range of activities involving participants in ‘simulated’ actions and circumstances where they imagine being in real-life situations under ‘controlled’ conditions (qtd. in Kumaran 73). Budden agrees with this definition and says that role play is “any speaking activity when you either put yourself into somebody else’s shoes, or when you stay in your own shoes but put yourself into an imaginary situation” (2). Finally, according to Chen-Jun, role play is a technique that can give learners the opportunity to practice improving a range of real-life spoken language situations in the classroom (qtd. in Aliakbari & Behroz 20).

In summary, it can be concluded that role play is understood as a speaking activity which improves communicative competence and provides practice in contexts which simulate real-life experiences (Al-Senaidi et al. 66).

### **3.4.2 Advantages and benefits of using role play in the classroom**

The use of role play has a lot of benefits for second language acquisition since its main objective is to enable students to communicate. It is an activity that has been used by different approaches to language teaching (Aliakbari & Behroz 20). Scarcella and Crookall state that through role play students “are exposed to large quantities of comprehensible input; they are actively involved; and they have positive attitudes” something that facilitates second language acquisition (qtd. in Krish 5). Role-play is considered a very useful technique to teach students speaking skills since the students’ participation is higher, and they learn and understand better if they are actively involved in that lesson (Kumaran 73).

According to Lucantoni, students can really enjoy role play since these offer great opportunities for using language in real life situations. This communicative activity enables learners to use spontaneous language and develop real life speaking skills (qtd. in Al-Senaidi et al. 67).

Ladousse also says that role play is “highly flexible, leaving much more scope for the exercise of individual variation, initiative, and imagination” (5). Besides the communicative and creativity benefits role-play provides, Kumaran cites other advantages arising from the use of role play. These advantages have to do with motivation, self-esteem, opportunities for shy learners, learner-centered and interesting activities (74-75) which are briefly described below.

#### **3.4.2.1 Motivation**

By being part of role play activities, students can be motivated to learn a second language without fear, since according to Hsu, Via and Moulding, role play is “curative for frustration and facilitates acquisition of the target language as a result” (qtd. in Stern 208). According to Maley & Duff, students’ involvement in role-play tasks require them to



participate physically and mentally. Therefore, role play techniques “restore the body and emotions to language learning, thereby restoring motivation” (qtd in Kumaran 74).

#### **3.4.2.2 Self-esteem**

As Hide says, there seems to be a correlation between self-esteem and the ability to orally produce a second language. Role play might help students build their confidence and thus their oral proficiency (qtd in Stern 209). In this way, role-play increases self-esteem by demonstrating that students will be able to express themselves in real-life communicative situations (Kumaran 74).

#### **3.4.2.3 Opportunities for shy learners**

Many learners may be too shy or embarrassed to speak; others may be afraid of making mistakes. But as Kumaran states, role play usually provides a safety-net for these kind of learners (74), since shy learners can hide behind a ‘mask’ of being someone else; something that gives them the opportunity to express themselves better as they no longer feel that their own personality is implicated (Ladousse 7).

#### **3.4.2.4 Learner-centered approach**

When using role play, students are in the limelight. In contrast with the audio-lingual method, through role play, students can feel free to take control of the activities conducted. Here, the teacher’s role is that of a facilitator, who listens for mistakes in order to be corrected later (Kumaran 75). It is important to remember that this is true of the communicative approach, and role play is part of this approach.

#### **3.4.2.5 Interesting activities**

Being part of role play is often interesting and fun for students and thus it increases learners’ participation (Kumaran 75). As Wan points out, the use of role play “is a break





from the usual textbook teaching and the ‘chalk and talk’ method of the teacher” (qtd. in Kumaran 75). Role play also gives students a sense of purpose since as Harmer states, learners “become more involved in an activity when they see a purpose in doing it” (qtd. in Kumaran 75).

### **3.4.3 Limitations of role play**

In spite of the great number of benefits role plays provide, there are some limitations teachers might encounter when using this type of activity. Some of these shortcomings are the following:

#### **3.4.3.1 Teacher may lose control over the lesson**

When incorporating role play in the classroom, it is difficult to ensure that all the students work using the target language. In fact, it is common that learners might choose to use their mother tongue for discussion purposes, thus the main objective of role play that is developing speaking skills might not be achieved (Shangeetha & Saravanan 16). Another constraint is that not all the students like or want to act. Some might feel reluctant to participate or enter into the character or the situation. Thus, the performance of the role play could result flat or boring (Kumaran 76).

#### **3.4.3.2 Time constraints**

According to Livingstone and Ments, role play can take too much of classroom time. The students should be given time to get familiar with role play activities and to receive feedback after the role play performance. However, short and simple role plays can take only 20 minutes to conduct, and time management is a problem that can be overcome with organization and preparation (qtd. in Kumaran 76).



### **3.4.3.3 Inappropriate classroom organization**

Livingstone states that using role play in the classroom can cause some problems such as unsuitable classroom organization and high noise levels (qtd. in Kumaran 76). However, not all the role plays require much movement from learners. Some solutions to these problems include having students perform their roles in their places if the situation is appropriate for that. To perform role plays that need a big space, chair and desks can be easily moved out of the way. Regarding the noise, if it is not too loud, it means that is not a huge problem as long as it does not disturb other classes (Shangeetha & Saravanan 17).

### **3.4.3.4 Incorrect grammatical production**

A risk that is present in role play is that learners tend to produce incorrect grammatical forms since immediate correction is not encouraged (Wan, qtd. in Kumaran 76). Sangeetha and Saravanan state that “the solution to this problem would be for the teacher to remind the learners of the correct forms and going through the form again with learners during the feedback session” (17). Littlewood states that “excessive correction will encourage learners to shift their focus from meaning to form” (qtd. in Kumaran 76).

### **3.4.3.5 Lack of purpose**

In some cases, when students are given a role or a situation to be in, the purpose of the activity is not stated. This usually happens when learners are given structured role plays with a role or a situation that was not created by themselves. The “lack of specific direction and purpose might result rather in confusion and uncertainty what to do next” (Ur 10). On the other hand, this can be overcome by having students develop the role play and use their imagination to achieve something at the end of it. Finally, it is important not



only to give the students the role or the situation of the role play but also the purpose of what is to be achieved (Kumaran 76).

#### **3.4.4 Experiments and findings**

It is important to emphasize that there is a considerable body of literature on how role play tasks can be applied. The present review highlights research on how the application of role play has benefited learners regarding their speaking abilities and fluency.

Aliakbari and Behroz' study involved 60 students as participants of a control and an experimental group. The participants of the experimental group were given role play cards with instructions about the role that they had to act out. The control group worked with materials based on traditional foreign language teaching methods. After being part of role-play activities twice a week for a period of two months, the findings showed that the experimental group performed better in speaking than the learners in the control group. The results proved conclusively that role play was an effective and fruitful activity for the learning of English. (24-25).

In Kumaran's study, two types of role-play were used; structured and free role play. The focus of this study was to see how students responded orally to both types. 79 Malaysian students from two classes took part in this study. Both types of activities were applied to both classes within 5 periods of English lessons each week. Structured role-play was carried out first, and then free role-play. At the end of these activities, questionnaires were given out to teachers and students in order to find out their perception of how effective and encouraging the use of role-play was for speaking skills (77). The findings of this research show that role-play does encourage students to speak in English. 90% of the participants enjoyed the activities and felt that they can practice speaking in English among their classmates freely in role-play activities. In addition, the

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students felt that role-play enabled them to communicate better in real-life situations.

Finally, this study also suggests that instead of concentrating on exam-oriented teaching, teachers should emphasize speaking skills since students are learning a language not only to pass exams but also to use it in real-life situations in the future (85).

Shen and Suwanthep carried out a study which involved 260 second-year non-English major undergraduate students from college English advanced classes in China. These students were randomly assigned into an experimental group of 130 and a control group of 130 students. The experimental group received the treatment during 18 weeks. They were part of classes based on constructive role play during 2 hours per week. The control group, on the other hand, did not receive any treatment but regular classes which not included the use of role play. The results of this study obtained from a pre- and a post-test show that after 18-week experiment on implementing constructive role play, the students belonging to the experimental group revealed a more significant improvement than the control group regarding speaking performance. In the experimental group, the students' speaking performance went up to 15% while in the control group there was not much improvement, the students' speaking performance went up to 0.25%. Regarding students' attitudes expressed in questionnaires, 83.9% of the participants agreed that the use of constructive role plays was interesting and 90% of the students reported the process of learning to speak English was more interactive and enjoyable. Moreover, 83.1% of the students felt that the use of constructive role plays helped them improving their speaking.

In conclusion, the Literature Review on the use drama-oriented activities reveals that it has a highly significant impact in an EFL classroom as it plays an important role not only in developing learners' speaking abilities but also in eliciting students' positive attitudes towards the target language learning process. Regarding the use of drama in



developing speaking abilities, the major benefit obtained is in getting students to speak in a wide range of realistic situations and in context. In addition, since the focus of this project is fluency, it seems that using drama, role play, specifically, creates the opportunity for spontaneous speech and although the spontaneity may create language with a huge number of errors, “the lack of pressure to produce “correct” speech promotes confidence and fluency” (Kao & O’Neil 24). In this context, Davies adds that:

*Drama activities facilitate the type of language behavior that should lead to fluency, and if it is accepted that the learners want to learn a language in order to make themselves understood in the target language, then drama does indeed further this end. (96).*

Finally, besides the linguistic benefits stated in this chapter, the use of drama-oriented activities provide the learners with fun and interesting activities which have a great impact on their attitudes towards the language learning. The researched literature illustrates that when being part of these activities, students feel more relaxed, motivated and confident using the language



## **CHAPTER II**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **1. Overview**

This chapter is intended to explain the methodology applied to carry out this research study. It provides detailed information about the methods, the institution in which it was applied, the participants involved, the instruments used to collect information, and finally, the procedures followed to complete this research work.

#### **2. Research Methodology**

This project employed quantitative and qualitative methodology. The quantitative data were collected from the graded tests results. The qualitative data were taken from class observations and students' interviews. This work, as mentioned above, followed an experimental-qualitative-interpretive design (Embleton 20). In addition, Mackey and Gass highlight that "quantitative research starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data and some numerical analysis is carried on" (2). To provide validity or not of the hypothesis, statistical analyses were used to find out whether or not the use of drama-oriented activities improved students' oral fluency.

This study aimed at answering the following research questions:

1. To what degree does the application of drama-oriented activities improve students' oral fluency?
2. What benefits do the participants obtain from the use of drama-oriented activities in the classroom regarding oral fluency skills?



### **3. Participants:**

#### **3.1 Institution**

This research study was carried out at Politécnica Salesiana University; a private University, imparting Salesian-Catholic values to the community. The English Language Institute at this university provides regular English courses based on six language levels. Students approving these 6 levels may achieve B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages (24). English levels at the Institute are divided into 3 categories: Beginner: Level 1-2, Intermediate: 3-4 and Advance: 5-6. All students at Politécnica University are required to pass English in order to graduate. Students belonging to Environmental Engineering, Psychology, Pedagogy, Veterinarian Medicine, and Social Communication are required to approve four English levels while Automotive, Computing, Mechanic, Electric, and Electronic Engineering students are required to approve 6 levels. The number of students per class ranges from 20-38. The Institute offers regular English courses for students belonging to specific majors as well as mixed courses with students belonging to different majors. At the language Institute, students take 1 level per semester, which is five months long with four hours of English classes a week.

#### **3.2 Students**

During the semester March – July 2013, I was assigned to work with different classes belonging to level 1 and 2. I decided to apply my study with my two classes belonging to level 2, one as the experimental group and the other as the control group. These groups were chosen as convenience samples as the researcher was teaching them and also their profile was comparable. The experimental group was made up of 26 students, 5 female and 21 male whose age ranges from 18 to 23 years old. As a general students'



background, it can be mentioned that most of the participants belong to the lower middle class, and come from public high schools. Six students had never studied English in primary or High School, and many of them expressed their lack of interest or motivation towards English learning (13 students). In addition, it is important to mention that 11 students took level 2 a year and a half after having taken level 1, 8 students about 2 years later and 7 students took level 2 immediately after taking level 1. This fact is worthy of mention since the time students were not in contact with the language could have influenced their performance in the activities of the intervention project as well as in the final results.

My other class belonging to level 2 was used as the control group, and it had similar characteristics to the ones of the experimental group. The participants in this group did not experience working with drama-oriented activities. Instead, they were given materials based on traditional methods of teaching a foreign language used by many teachers at the Institute. The same pre- and post-test administrated to the experimental group was used for this group. The tests were taken by 26 students, 6 female and 19 male, whose ages range from 18 to 23 years old. 10 students from the group took level 2 right after they finished level 1, 1 student took it 1 semester later, 9 students after 1 year, 4 students after 2 years and 1 student 3 years and a half later.

. It is necessary to note that drama-oriented activities are not usually included in the teaching methods of the teachers at the UPS. For this reason, the control group classes I taught were based on a regular syllabus which worked well for this study. Thus, it was possible to analyze how much the control students progressed without the use of drama and compare it to the progress of the experimental group that did use it.

In order to meet the ethics any research study requires, the first step to follow before carrying out the research project was to obtain consent from the authorities at the



University as well as from the participants. A consent form (see Annex 1) was sent to the English Language Coordinator in order to obtain permission to start with the intervention project. In addition, a copy of the thesis proposal was sent in order to show the importance and benefits a project of this type would bring to the Language Institute as well as to the University. As soon as I received the consent of the English Coordinator, the next step was carried out. The participants were asked to sign a consent form (see Annex 2) in which they accepted being part of the research as subjects of the intervention project. This informed consent included the main characteristics of the research project, the participants' role during the processes, the ethics of the research, and information about the researcher. By signing this consent form, the participants agreed to taking a pre-test and post-test, creating and performing dialogues, role-plays and any other kind of drama-oriented activities, being observed and video-taped during the application of the project, taking part in an interview at the end of the intervention, and finally attending the required sessions during the project.

After this legal procedure was fulfilled, the researcher was able to proceed with the research study.

#### **4. Time**

This research was carried out during a period of 5 months approximately between March and July, 2013. With the consent of the English Institute coordinator, the researcher was able to work with the participants for a period of 3 hours a week during 20 weeks which meant 60 hours destined for the whole research process: topic introduction, consent forms signing, questionnaires administration, pre-test and post-test application. The 60 hours were destined as follows:

- Topic introduction, signing of consent forms and preliminary questionnaire administration: 2 hours



- Drama-oriented activities intervention: 48 hours
- Pre-Test: 4 hours
- Post-Test: 4 hours
- Final Questionnaire: 2 hours

## **5. Data collection**

Two kinds of data were collected: quantitative and qualitative data. For the quantitative data analysis, pre- and post-oral tests were taken by the participants at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. These tests are described in detail in the materials section below. Data for the qualitative study were collected through a final questionnaire administrated to participants at the end of the semester. In addition classroom observations and video recordings were done in order to obtain this kind of data.

### **5.1 Materials**

In this section, a detailed description of all the materials used to conduct the current research work is presented.

#### **5.1.1 Course Text Book**

During the time this research project was carried out, the English Language Institute at Politécnica Salesiana University used the Text Book *Top Notch* 1 and 2 (Saslow et al., 2011) as the material for its English regular courses. Each text book contained 10 units; however, each level at the Institute was required to cover 6 units out from 10. In this context, level two covered units 7-10 from Top Notch 1 and units 1-2 from Top Notch 2. This text book provided a limited amount of drama-oriented activities, for this reason, one of the aims of this research study was to adapt this text book by using the methodology proposed in this paper in order to enhance speaking skills and improve students' oral fluency. The topics used for this project were taken and adapted from this textbook. Thus,



the students were at the same time able to cover the units required by the English Institute in order to pass level 2.

### **5.1.2 Preliminary Questionnaire**

In order to obtain information about the participants' background, a preliminary questionnaire was designed (see Annex 3). This questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part had to do with participants' general and personal information: gender, age, major, social status, etc. This is important information to know, since as Lightbown et al. state, "social factors at a more general level can affect motivation, attitudes, and language learning success" (65). The second section was structured in order to find out about the participants' previous experiences with the language and their opinions and feelings towards the subject, something that involves motivation and students attitudes, which I consider important factors when learning a new language. As Thornbury states, students may have positive or negative attitudes not only to the learning process in general but also to different aspects of it, which include the target language and its speakers or culture, the material provided in class, the teacher and his / her methodology, and the learning situation. These attitudes are important aspects that influence students' general motivation and their final success (20). In addition, he also says that "motivation is what drives learners to achieve a goal, and is a key factor determining success or failure in language learning (137)."

The questionnaire was provided to the participants in Spanish in order to avoid misunderstandings and thus obtain more reliable answers. This preliminary questionnaire was administrated during the second week of March, 2013 as one of the first steps of the intervention (see Annex 3).



### **5.1.3 Pre-test / Post-test**

An oral test was used to assess the participants' speaking skills and fluency before and after the treatment of the project. This test was used to evaluate six important sub-skills: task completion, comprehensibility, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and language control. The test structure was based on KET (Key English Test) from Cambridge English. The speaking section from this test is intended to prove students' ability to use English to communicate in simple situations, understand and use basic phrases and expressions, introduce themselves and answer basic personal questions and interact with English speakers at a basic level. This KET exam tests A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The researcher observed several videos in YouTube in order to obtain samples on how this test is administrated. I found this test useful for the group since the participants belong to a beginner level and this test measures basic knowledge of the language. The test was done in pairs and consisted of two segments which are explained in detail in the next section.

It is important to remark that the test used for the pre-test was the same used for the post-test application at the end of the intervention. In the first section of the test (personal interview), students were asked 6 questions about their personal life. The first three questions were exactly the same as of the pre-test, and the others were different. This enabled the researcher to analyze how much students progressed when they were familiar with the questions in comparison with how much they did it when encountering new ones. For the second section, different pairs of prompt cards were administrated to the participants during the post-test administration.



### **5.1.3.1 First section of the test**

In this section, students were required to answer various personal questions asked by the interviewer. This means participants had to answer questions about familiar topics related with their daily routine, family, hobbies, school, city and interests. For example: What's your name? How do you spell it? Where are you from? What's your favorite subject at school? Why? What's your favorite sport? Why? How would you describe your city/school/ family? Etc. Although, students were called in pairs to take the oral test, this first section required individual answers from each of the participants, and no interaction between them was needed. As it was mentioned before, the interviewer used a bank of questions for this section where questions were chosen randomly (see Annex 4).

### **5.1.3.2 Second section of the test**

In this section, interaction between the participants was required. Prompt cards were used to stimulate questions and answers of a non-personal kind. The interlocutor read out instructions and gave a question card to one participant and an answer card to the other. For example, Participant A was given an answer card containing information that participant B did not have, for example, information about a new teacher coming to school. On the other hand, Participant B was given a question card containing keys to ask questions for example: What / name? So participant B was supposed to ask: What's the new teacher's name? Thus, participant B tried to find out information participant B had. After the participants asked and answered questions, they changed roles with different cards on different topics (see Annex 5).

### **5.1.4 Oral fluency rubric**

The scores of the pre- and the post-test administrated to the students were obtained by using an oral fluency rubric (see Annex 6) which aimed to mark 5 main aspects or



parameters: 1) smoothness, 2) pace, 3) coherence and amount of speech, 4) mistranslations and 5) resorting to L1. Each parameter was scored over 4 points which gives us a total score of 20 points in the test.

#### **5.1.4.1 Smoothness:**

This parameter makes reference to the speaker ability to express his/her ideas smoothly without or with minimal hesitation or pauses that could interfere with communication.

#### **5.1.4.2 Pace:**

It refers to the ability of the speaker to speak and express him/herself at a normal conversational pace. This means that the candidate does not speak too slowly or laboriously making it hard to understand what he/she says.

#### **5.1.4.3 Coherence and amount of speech:**

This parameter has to do with the ability of the candidate to show logical thoughts that agree with the main topic of the conversation or questions asked using a wide range of words and sentences.

#### **5.1.4.4 Mistranslations:**

This aspect regards the capacity of the participant to convey his/her message without evident use of mistranslations. This means that the candidate do not use mistranslated words or expressions from Spanish or made up words.

#### **5.1.4.5 Resorting to L1:**

This section of the test has to do with the ability of the speaker to convey his/her message without evident resort to L1. This means that the participants do not express their thoughts, answer or ask questions using Spanish.

For each of these aspects of the Oral Fluency Rubric the lowest score is 0/4 while the highest is 4/4. If any student was scored 0/4 in any of these parameters, it meant that the participant did not fit in any of the descriptions of the rubric.

I chose these five elements since I agree with Fillmore and Brown when they state that these components are essential when judging fluency. The first parameters in the speaking rubric used in this study are smoothness and pace. I agree with Fillmore and Brown's idea that a fluent speaker should speak smoothly and at a normal conversational pace and speed avoiding long and continuous pauses and hesitations that could interfere with communication. These are common problems that I as a teacher encounter in most of my classes, even in advanced classes. Students usually do not feel confident with the language and as a consequence their speech is slow and full of long and uncomfortable pauses that usually prevent from having a normal conversation.

Next, I consider that coherence proposed by Fillmore, is an important component of fluency since a fluent speaker should perform coherently and his/her ideas should agree with the main topic of the conversation.

From my personal experience, when students answer a question in class or in an oral test, sometimes they say things that have nothing to do with the question or simply their ideas are not understandable or coherent. For this reason, coherence should be considered an essential element of fluency. Finally, another aspect that I agree with is Campbell's statement about disfluency markers. I think they are also significant components to be considered to refer to the lack of fluency a speaker may have. In this



context, I have considered resorting to L1 and mistranslations as part of the parameters to be included in my oral rubric to score fluency. I have done this, since from my personal experience in class, it is very common to see and listen to students using their native language to perform tasks or assignments, work in pairs, groups and even to in oral tests. Sometimes students answer questions using Spanish words or fillers. In addition, the lack of vocabulary some students have, make them mistranslate words from L1 to L2 or even make up new words from Spanish into English causing interference in the communication or causing an unnatural conversation. For these reasons, I agree with Campbell's idea to consider these disfluency markers as essential components to judge fluency or in this case disfluency.

#### **5.1.5 Lesson Plans**

In order to carry out the project intervention in an organized form, twelve lesson plans were created for a 4 hour-class each. The lessons plans were divided into three sections. Pre-task, task performance, and post-task. Each lesson plan included the expected outcomes to be achieved after each stage. For a lesson plan sample (see Annex 7).

### **6. Intervention Stage**

#### **6.1 Drama-oriented activities**

For the project intervention, 24 drama-oriented activities were used which included 4 drama games, 8 dialogues, 11 role plays and 1 film creation. These activities will be described in detail below.

##### **6.1.1 Drama Games**

The intervention of the project began with the application of drama games. These drama games served as introductory exercises which focused on cooperative learning,





miming and body language rather than speaking language practice or communicative activities to aid fluency. So why bother with exercises which take up time and lead to little use of the foreign language which was the purpose of this study? According to Maley and Duff the reasons the most important ones to justify the use of them: 1) these games are useful as a smooth connection between activities. Students usually come from a lesson in another subject, such as Math, or from other activities, such as a day at their work, and it is not practicable to expect them to be ready and start immediately on learning a foreign language, and even more to get involved easily in this case into drama activities. These exercises help to eliminate such immediate worries and concerns. 2) These games also aim to put the students in a relaxed and uninhibited state in which they are much more receptive than they usually are. Thus the unconscious resistance of some students to learning the foreign language is reduced and makes the work on subsequent exercises and activities more open and creative. 3) Finally, this kind of exercises “lead to an increase in awareness of others, and of oneself in relationships with others.” Thus, confidence is aroused making possible the cooperative learning which many of the other drama activities demand (38). In addition, from a personal experience, students are usually shy or reluctant to act and use their body language, so these games helped them to lose their fear to act and be ready for the next step of the intervention which involved acting and performing a role.

Participants took part in four drama games which included the following:

#### **6.1.1.1 Handshakes:**

The students move freely around the room shaking hands with everyone else. As they do it, they say their own first names and the expression “nice to meet you”. Then, they do the same exercise again, only this time they have to greet the other person by his or her name. If they have problems remembering names, the other person should help them.



The teacher can set the occasion for the meeting/greeting (e.g. this is a reunion party for new students at the university) and students should make the appropriate remarks according to the situation. This activity is suitable for all levels, and useful for getting the class mixed up. In addition it helps the participants to learn the others' names, something that according to Maley and Duff is "an important factor in loosening up formal relationships. Hence a good exercise to do early on in a programme" (63-64).

#### **6.1.1.2 Body words:**

To perform this activity, the class is divided into groups having approximately the same number of people in each. Each group has to find a word with the same number of letters as the number of the members of the group. Then, each person tries to form one of the letters of the word by using his or her body. Thus, the whole group presents a visual representation of the word to the rest of the class to guess. This is an enjoyable 'loosening-up' exercise that provides an opportunity to practice enunciation and pronunciation. Therefore, it is useful for elementary or weaker intermediate learners (Maley and Duff 65).

#### **6.1.1.3 The seat on my left is free:**

For this game, the participants have to know each other's names already. They sit in circles with one chair left empty. The person with an empty seat on the left says: "The seat on my left is free, and I'd like (John) to sit next to me." Then, John (or whoever it is) moves to the empty seat, leaving his own place free. The participant who now has the vacant seat on the left repeats the process, and so on. Everybody has 3 lives to start the game. If someone who is called to sit on an empty seat does not do it immediately or is not paying attention, loses a life. When the person has lost his or her 3 lives, loses the game and has



to stop playing. This is a fun activity for students and gives a great opportunity for mixing (Maley and Duff 70).

#### **6.1.1.4 Words guessing (Food):**

For this activity, the participants form pairs. Each person has a card with one or more words written on it. The words make reference to food and flavors (e.g. a sour lemon, a spicy hot dog, spaghetti, etc.). Partners take it in turn to mime the word or words to each other, using gestures only, and the other has to guess what his or her partner is eating. This activity is useful for miming and body language practice.

After having used these activities, the group had mixed up, and a comfortable and confident environment was created in order to carry out the subsequent drama activities.

#### **6.1.2 Dialogues**

As the second part of the intervention, dialogue building was used to promote speaking and interaction among the students. This kind of activity helped the students in practicing conversations and using the language to interact. During this stage, participants were asked to create their own dialogues based on topics from their textbook (Top Notch1-2) and from other topics provided by the teacher. These dialogues are different from role plays in that they did not require much acting since students performed the dialogues as themselves within topics related to their personal life. This kind of activity also involved improvisation of questions and answers by the students. Participants were asked to work in pairs, and took part in 8 dialogues which included the following topics:

##### **6.1.2.1 Providing personal information**

For this topic, students took turns to ask and answer questions in order to get to know each other. For example:



A: What's your name?  
B: My name is Esteban  
A: How do you spell it?  
B: E-S-T-E-B-A-N. What's your name?  
A: I'm Marco. And where are you from?  
B: I'm from Cuenca, and you?  
A: I'm from Cuenca, too... (Etc.)

#### **6.1.2.2 Music and entertainment**

Students created a dialogue to ask and answer questions about their favorite music genres and entertainment such as movies, plays, concerts and art exhibits, etc. In addition, they were asked to include an invitation for any kind of cultural event. Students could answer accepting or declining the invitation. For example:

A: Mary, what's your favorite kind of music?  
B: Oh, I love romantic music.  
A: Do you like pop?  
B: Yes, I do. I like that too.  
A: Would you like to go to Enrique Iglesias' concert this weekend?  
B: Oh, I'd love to but I have to study. Sorry. Maybe next time... (Etc.).

#### **6.1.2.3 Family**

Participants took part in a conversation about their families. For example:

A: Do you come from a big family?  
B: Not really. I have 1 brother and 1 sister.  
A: What do they do?  
B: My brother is a student and my sister is a lawyer.  
A: and do you have any nieces or nephews?  
B: Yes, I have 1 niece. Her name is Karla... etc.

#### **6.1.2.4 Food and restaurants**

Participants were asked to create a dialogue about their favorite food which included an invitation to have something to eat. For example:

A: What's your favorite food?  
B: My favorite food is pizza.  
A: I love pizza too.



B: Are you in the mood for pizza now?  
A: Yes, why don't we go to eat at Pizza hut?  
B: Good idea. Let's go

#### **6.1.2.5 Favorite sports and fitness activities**

Students took part in a conversation about their favorite sports and fitness activities (soccer, basketball, running, swimming, etc.) including adverbs of frequency. For example:

A: How often do you exercise?  
B: I go to the gym twice a week and sometimes go swimming.  
A: and do you practice any sport?  
B: No, I don't but I like soccer. What about you?  
A: I love basketball. I practice it on the weekends... (Etc.).

#### **6.1.2.6 Last vacations**

Students were asked to talk about their last vacations including information about the weather, places, people, the time spent there and the activities they did. For example:

A: What did you do on your last vacation?  
B: I went to Montañita beach.  
A: How was the weather?  
B: It wasn't very hot but it was ok.  
A: How long did you stay there?  
B: I spent one week there.  
A: Did you go with your family?  
B: No, I went with my friends. I was a good vacation... (Etc.).

#### **6.1.2.7 Have you ever...?**

Participants took part in a conversation about their life experiences. They asked and answered questions about the food they have tried, places they have visited, and any other interesting activities they have done. For example:

A: Have you ever traveled to another country?  
B: Yes, I have. I have visited Colombia and Peru.  
A: What places did you know in Peru?  
B: I went to Cusco and Machu Picchu.



A: Have you ever tried an unusual dish?  
B: Yes, I have. I ate 'chontacuros' when I went to Baños de Ambato.  
A: Did you like it? No I didn't. It was disgusting... (Etc.)

### **6.1.2.8 Movies**

Students were asked to talk about their favorite kind of movies, films, and actors or actresses, and they had to include an invitation for a movie. For example:

A: What kind of movies do you like?  
B: Oh, I love comedies.  
A: Do you like horror films?  
B: No, I don't. I never watch them.  
A: Who's your favorite actor?  
B: I like Adam Sandler. He is funny.  
A: I like his movies too. Would you like to go to the cinema this weekend?  
B: Sure. What time? (Etc.).

### **6.1.3 Role Play**

Free role play was used during this part of the intervention. This kind of role play involved students free creation of their role plays based on a topic or prompts given by the teacher. According to Thornbury, in his article "Minimal Resources: Role-Plays and Discussion," this kind of role play allows students to communicate freely and spontaneously (1). These role plays were created by students with no fixed scripts provided by the teacher or the textbook. Conversely, the students were asked to create their own role plays using their own ideas and creativity. However, they were allowed to write their ideas in a form of draft scripts in order to have them as a guide to practice before their performance in front of the class.

This type of role play was used in order to promote students' conversation, interaction, and creativity, and to add fun to the classroom. In addition, the participants' personality was reflected in most of these role plays. From a personal experience, it seems that when students create and work on their own role play, they do not use the language



mechanically but actively and vividly. This can be possible since they are the ones who have the power to change the course of the events in the role play. Moreover, students do not focus on memorizing lines but instead they know the meaning of what they have created and feel what they were saying; thus they can perform better.

In this stage, acting was required using spoken and body language. Role play was chosen not only to build students' speaking abilities as mentioned, but also to practice vocabulary in different situations students may face outside the classroom (at a restaurant, doctor, hotel, etc.). In addition, based on Dodson statement that role play does not need to be limited only to these functions (134), students were also asked to perform the role plays in different ways or moods: rude, ultra-polite, excited, sad, etc. Thus, students were able to practice expressing moods and feelings, and fun was added to role play performance. It is important to remark that although students were allowed to write draft scripts and use them as a guide to practice them, they were asked to perform their role plays spontaneously and by using improvisation too. They were not allowed to read any script or memorize lines word by word.

To implement the role plays, four teaching steps were taken and adapted from Janudom et al. study which included 1) creating and working on the role play (draft script), 2) role play rehearsal, 3) role play performance, and 4) role play evaluation (7). Each of these steps are detailed as follows:

#### **6.1.3.1 Creating and working on the role play (draft script)**

To start working with role plays, first, students were asked to form pairs or groups depending on the topic of the role play they were given. At the beginning of the intervention, different groups or pairs were formed randomly each time a new role play was introduced. The aim of it was to allow students to get along with others, interact and learn from different people in the class. However, it seemed that some participants felt

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more comfortable working with people they chose or felt more confident with, so for the next activities they were allowed to form and choose their own groups. In addition, participants had the opportunity to choose what character they wanted to be and the nature the character was going to have. Next, students were provided with previous knowledge and background about the role play they were required to take part in. It was necessary to set the scene, and the characters taking part in each role play. After this step was completed, the teacher wrote some key information and prompts on the board in order to let students know what they might say in each role play. Then, the participants were given enough time (around 30 minutes) to create their own role play based on the information and cues the teacher had written on the board. Students were allowed to use or check vocabulary and grammar structures from their textbooks in order to help them use the language correctly. Participants were also allowed to make notes and write draft scripts to help them organize the role play and practice it. It is important to remark that students were asked to create their own scripts freely and spontaneously. It means that creativity, humor, and any other ingredient was welcome in the script. The role of the teacher during this stage was of a facilitator or a walking dictionary. The teacher supported students not only by providing them with vocabulary or useful expressions to be used in the script but also by motivating and pushing them to be creative, use their imagination to avoid common and typical scenarios and go beyond what was written on the board.

#### **6.1.3.2 Role play rehearsal**

In order to elicit participants' physical and emotional engagement in the activities, role play rehearsal was designed. During this stage, participants were given enough time (around 30 minutes) to rehearse what they had created in the previous step. As mentioned above, the background knowledge established in the first step, helped the





participants to understand the role they chose to play as well as the context where the communication and interaction took place. The role of the teacher during this stage was as of a close monitor who was able to interrupt the students in order to correct their mistakes (pronunciation, grammar, word order, etc.) and to motivate them to get into their role, and to ensure that participants were performing the role play by acting what they were saying, and showing with their bodies the emotions or feelings they were delivering orally.

### **6.1.3.3 Role play performance**

After participants completed the previous steps successfully, they were ready to present their final product. Students were asked to perform their role plays in front of the whole class. In order to make the performance more realistic, students were told in advance to bring clothes, masks, wigs, or any other objects or accessories related to the given topic. They also were allowed to set the room as they wished in order to have a suitable environment for their performance. During this stage, no interruptions from the teacher took place since the purpose of this performance was to experience lifelike communication situations when there are not teachers to interrupt or correct their mistakes. As Thornbury states, “conventional wisdom suggests that teachers should not interrupt their learners in fluency activities” (57) and because besides being wrong to interrupt the flow of a fluency activity, it would be very demotivating for the students.

For the performance of the role plays, students were asked to act by using their facial expressions, body language, appropriate intonations, and any other gesture to convey the intended meaning of each character and line. This allowed participants to “internalize both linguistic and non-linguistic components of speaking ability” (Janudom et al. 8). Due to time constraints, there were some sessions in which not all students were able to perform their role plays. For this reason, some pairs or groups were chosen randomly to present



their work. During this stage, students were videotaped in order to have available material to be subsequently evaluated.

#### **6.1.3.4 Role play evaluation**

Before starting students' performance, each member of the audience was given a short observation rubric (see Annex 8). This rubric was designed for two main purposes: first, to obtain feedback from each presentation in order to make any necessary improvements, and second, to provide each student a reason to pay attention to their classmates' performance. I designed this strategy based on previous observations of students not always paying attention to their classmates when they are speaking. They usually get distracted by the smallest thing in the classroom. For this reason, by using this observation rubric now participants had a purpose to pay attention to their partners since they were acting as their evaluators. This evaluation took place right after each role play performance, and as mentioned above, it was done by all participants in order to obtain valuable opinions and suggestions about their own performance as well as their classmates' performances. The role of the teacher during this stage was of a moderator who tried to listen to and validate everybody's opinions. This observation rubric was also used by the teacher during each presentation in order to make notes and analyze the students' progress on performing a role play throughout the implementation of the project.

Participants were asked to create their own role plays on the following topics:

#### **6.1.3.5 Registering at an English club:**

Language:	Structures: Wh-questions, yes / no questions, verb to be, simple present
	Functions: Asking and providing personal information
Roles:	1) A receptionist, 2) A club member



**Procedure:**

Participants were asked to work in pairs in order to create a role play which included 2 main characters: 1) A receptionist, and 2) a club member. Students pretended they were registering at an English club having different options to choose from (listening, speaking, reading, writing, singing, and cooking club among others). They had to interact with each other by asking and answering questions about personal information in order to get the club member registered in any club. The conversation could take place either face to face or pretending they were on the phone. Students were allowed to make any variation. Turns were taken to practice both roles.

**6.1.3.6 A TV interview of a famous person:**

Language: Structures: The interrogative, simple present, simple past, future  
Functions: finding out about a person's life, routines, likes, dislikes, personal achievements and future goals.  
Roles: 1) A famous person, 2) A TV interviewer

**Procedure:**

The students formed pairs. Two roles were required for this activity: Student A chose to play the role of a famous person, either alive or dead. Student B (TV interviewer) was supposed to ask questions about this famous person's life which included questions about personal information, hobbies, routines, likes, dislikes, personal achievements and future projects. (e.g. –What do you like to do in your free time? –What is the most important thing you ever did? Etc.). Students were allowed to make any variation. Turns were taken to practice both roles.

**6.1.3.7 At the restaurant:**

Language: Structure: the interrogative, simple present, would / like, food vocabulary  
Functions: ordering food, serving food



Roles: Servers and costumers

Procedure:

This role play implied a group project formed by 4 students each. Students were asked to create their own restaurant by following these instructions: 1) choose an original name for the restaurant and create a poster with the name of the restaurant on it (to be pasted on the wall), 2) create their own menus (a big one to be pasted on the wall, and 2-4 small ones for costumers, 3) bring anything necessary to set the classroom as a restaurant (table cloth, plates, cups, glasses, snacks, vases, etc.) and finally 4) dress up. Each group was assigned a place in the classroom to set their restaurants. Then, 2 students of each group were asked to stay at “their restaurants” as servers while the 2 others were asked to walk around the class as costumers. They were supposed to visit all the other restaurants (groups) and ask for food. The 2 servers who stayed at each restaurant were asked to take turns to serve the costumers coming to their restaurant. After the costumers had visited all the restaurants, the students were asked to change roles and do the same process. Thus, all students were able to perform as servers and costumers. The best project or restaurant was given extra points.

#### **6.1.3.8 Foretelling the future:**

Language: Structure: Future tense

Function: making predictions

Roles: 1) A fortune teller, 2) a costumer

Procedure:

In this activity, student A had to foretell student B’s future by reading his or her right hand or by looking at crystal ball. Student B asked any question he or she wanted related to his/her future. Any variation was allowed. Students took turns to play both roles.



#### **6.1.3.9 At a travel agency:**

Language:            Structure: the interrogative, simple present, future tense  
                         Function: making reservations and planning a trip  
Roles:                1) A travel agent, 2) a costumer

Procedure:

For this role play students worked in pairs. Student A took the role of the travel agent and student B of the costumer. Both took part in a conversation about making flight reservations and planning a trip.

#### **6.1.3.10 At the airport:**

Language:            Structure: the interrogative, simple present, future tense  
                         Function: checking in  
Roles:                1) A clerk, 2) a passenger

Procedure:

Students worked in pairs to take part of a role play at the airport. The passenger checked in at the front desk and the clerk asked and answered any questions, and gave information to the passenger about the flight and the luggage.

#### **6.1.3.11 A tourist in a city:**

Language:            Structure: the interrogative, simple present, future tense  
                         Function: asking for and giving directions and locations,  
                         Giving suggestions.

Roles:                1) A tourist, 2) a local person

Procedure:

For this role play, students worked in pairs. The tourist asked for directions and locations and a local person helped him/her find the place. In addition, they interacted



asking and giving suggestions about what places to visit, the food and traditions of the city.

#### **6.1.3.12 At the hotel:**

Language: Structure: the interrogative, simple present, future tense  
Function: making reservations, checking in/out, and asking for services.

Roles: 1) A hotel clerk, 2) a famous guest

Procedure:

For this role play, students worked in pairs to pretend they were at a hotel. The guest staying at a hotel was a famous person who came to the city for a special event. The famous guest made a reservation and asked for different and demanding services. At the end the guest had to check out too and gave his opinion about the city and the hotel.

#### **6.1.3.13 At the doctor:**

Language: Structure: the interrogative, simple present, should, must  
Function: asking for and giving suggestions

Roles: 1) the patient, 2) a friend, 3) a receptionist, and 4) the doctor

Procedure:

For this role play, students took part of 3 scenes. In the first scene, the patient got recommendations from a friend to go to a certain doctor in the city. In the second scene, the patient called the receptionist to make an appointment with the doctor. Finally, in the last scene, the patient saw the doctor, and the doctor gave him a prescription and other recommendations.

#### **6.1.3.14 At the shopping center:**

Language: Structure: the interrogative, simple present, how much  
Function: asking for colors, sizes, styles and prices



Roles: 1) A sales person, 2) a shopper

Procedure:

Students took part of a role play at the shopping center where they had to interact asking and answering questions about clothes, their colors, sizes, prices and other characteristics.

#### **6.1.3.15 At a job interview:**

Language: Structure: the interrogative, simple present, simple past, future tense

Function: applying for a job interview

Roles: 1) An interviewer, 2) applicant 1, 3) applicant 2

Procedure:

For this role play students worked in groups of 3 interacting at a job interview. Students were asked to apply for an unusual job. They had to talk about their skills and qualities, studies, work experience and any other important aspect about them in order to get the job. At the end, the interviewer had to choose and hire the best person for the job.

#### **6.1.4 A Short Film**

As a final project and activity of the intervention stage, students were asked to film a short video lasting 5-8 minutes. In the videos, students performed their own stories based on a-scripts written by themselves. Students performed comedies, drama, scary and love stories. Students were also allowed to adapt any story from movies or novels if they wished to. Videos were used in this stage since, according to Thornbury, the use of videos in a language classroom is very common and allows learners and teachers to create a virtual leaning environment. Nowadays, video cameras are widely available which allows students to film each other, and make short 'documentaries' in English that can be



exchanged with learners in other settings (239-240). In addition, having students film their own videos allows them “to shift from reflective viewers to knowledgeable content producers”. Another advantage of film making is that it enables students not only to “share their view of the world” to other people but also to develop other more significant learning skills for their lives. Finally, in order to perform the filming task, prior knowledge of the language is used by the learners in order to create new language awareness (Gromik 27).

Students worked in groups from 4 to 5 for this task. The procedure to carry out this final project had 4 main stages: 1) Writing the script, 2) Script proofreading, 3) Film editing and making, and 4) Film presentation.

#### **6.1.4.1 Writing the script:**

During this stage, the participants chose a topic or a video genre for their project. After the type of film and story were defined, students were asked to write the script of their stories using narration (in a small percentage) and dialogues. Students were given 30 minutes during 3 classes to create and write their scripts.

Writing a film script is useful for students. As Gromik states, film making allows students to use their prior English knowledge to create their film script by selecting appropriate linguistic forms, respecting important grammar structures and negotiating the accuracy of their output (29). In addition, collaboration plays an important role during this stage. It means that the students use their diverse language experiences and prior knowledge of English to help each other in the script creation. In this context, the script writing might encourage meaningful communication and contribution among students since it implies the students’ ability to negotiate meaning to create comprehensible dialogues (Gromik 32). The language used for interaction was supposed to be English all the time; however, when students were engaged in discussions among themselves, they usually switched to their native language, Spanish. In order to solve this problem, I tried to

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walk around the class monitoring and checking if students were using the second language. Another way to encourage students to use English was through a kind of game that was held during each session. Each group was given a box in which the person of the group who used English the least, or in other words, used Spanish the most had to pay 1 dollar at the end of the session. A leader of a group (the best student in each group generally) was in charge of controlling and receiving the money. This game was carried out with a previous agreement of all the class in order to avoid future complaints. At the end of the semester, some snacks were bought with the money collected during all the sessions, thus there was a final moment to share in class which was not specifically academic.

Finally, during this script-writing stage, students were asked to use their dictionaries to find new words. The teacher monitored the script making and the use of the target language, and helped students choosing the right vocabulary and expressions for their script.

#### **6.1.4.2 Script proofreading:**

After the students finished writing their stories, the film scripts were checked by the teacher. Any grammar or vocabulary error was corrected and then given back to the students in order to make the necessary corrections before proceeding with the video filming.

#### **6.1.4.3 Film editing and making:**

For the film making, students used their own cameras or they had the option of borrowing three digital video cameras available from the Social Communication department at the University. The students were given two weeks to rehearse and practice their dialogues, and to film their videos. The filming making was not carried out at



the Institution since most of the stories required different scenarios. Thus, the participants worked at home or at any other place. I asked the students to use English for interaction between themselves during this stage; however, since the participants did not film their videos in the class, it was impossible for the teacher to control or monitor the use of the second language. Although the aim of this activity was the use of the second language, having the students edit and film their videos implied the exposition to editing operations with software and technology in their mother tongue which in a certain way turned out to be positive since it reduced the burden on the learners and allowed them to view the task as enjoyable and achievable (Gromik 31). Therefore, the only role of the teacher during this stage was of a motivator who encouraged the students to use English.

For the performance of their stories, students used role play to act out their characters. This helped them to understand what they were saying and to use body language and the correct intonation to emphasize their intended meaning. The participants were required to read the script in advance, rehearse and remember it for the filming stage. They were not allowed to read any script when being filmed; improvisation was also used.

During the film editing, the participants had the opportunity to check their work and performance before handing in to the teacher. As Gromik mentions, this might stimulate them to improve their work, and to do this, students are encouraged to create a plan for selecting the particular film fragments they prefer, and eliminate the unnecessary parts of their films. In addition, students can explore different software to reach their desired objectives, and are able to exchange ideas with their workmates and communicate with other class members to consider new editing options (30).

#### **6.1.4.4 Film presentation:**

The final stage of this project was the presentation of each group's film. This presentation was not carried out in the normal classroom where students usually received

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their classes. Instead, a small auditorium at the University was used aiming at creating a different atmosphere and enhancing the project presentation. Since all this study work involved drama-oriented activities, the students' films presentation was carried out in a movie awards format where all the students played the role of famous actors or actresses going to a film awards show. During this event, some students played some live music to open and close the show. There were also nominees for best actors or actresses and for the best film. Finally the winners received an award. The nominees as well as the winners were chosen by a jury formed by 3 other teachers from the institute who chose the best actors or actresses in based on their performances in the films.

During the projection of the films, the participants had the opportunity to become viewers of their own and their classmates' work. Thus, they were able to observe and analyze not only their performance but also their use of the target language, and their creativity reflected in their story and performance. This enabled them to think of any necessary or relevant improvements for future projects. In addition, as Ryan states, these videos can be used as source of authentic material by future students, demonstrating that these kinds of tasks are achievable (Gromik 28).

#### **6.1.5 Video Evaluation**

In order to evaluate the participants' video performances, a video rubric was used based on 5 parameters: 1) smoothness and pace, 2) content and creativity, 3) performance, 4) mistranslations, and 5) resorting to L1. Each of the parameters was scored over 4 points which gives us a total score of 20/20 for the videos (see Annex 9).

#### **6.2 Audio and video recordings**

There are many options to be used in second language classrooms observations. They differ depending if the focus is on qualitative or quantitative descriptions. They also



differ if the observation is in 'real time', or if it is used later outside the classroom (Lightbown et al. 115). For this study, the participants were audio recorded during the pre- and post-test in order to obtain quantitative data aiming at analyze if there was any improvement regarding the participants' fluency during the intervention. For this analysis, transcripts of such recordings were used. On the other hand, for qualitative descriptions, the participants were video-taped during their performance on drama-oriented activities such as dialogues and role plays.

### **6.3 Final Questionnaire**

At the end of the intervention, a final questionnaire was administrated to the participants in order to obtain qualitative data. The questions were destined to find out the students' opinions and feelings about being part of drama-oriented activities, and what benefits they perceived they obtained from these activities (see Annex 10).

## **CHAPTER III**

### **DATA DESCRIPTION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION**

#### **1. Overview**

In this chapter, an explanation of all the data obtained during the pre-test, the treatment, and the post-test is presented. It shows the main outcomes of the research by using data description, analysis and interpretation. To begin with the data analysis, tables, bar charts, and line graphs are used in order to describe the data results. Therefore, the main findings will be structured under a new heading of interpretation.

#### **2. Statistical and Descriptive Analysis of Results of the Pre- and Post-test:**

The following analysis shows the performance of the participants of the experimental and the control group in the oral fluency pre- and post-test scored over 20 points. The pre- and post-test were administered to 26 participants in both groups.

##### **2.1 Control Group:**

As mentioned in previous chapters, it is important to emphasize that the control group did not receive any treatment. In Table 1 below, the scores over 20 points for each participant of the control group obtained during the pre- and post-test are shown. The identity of the students is protected by using the letter "C" and a number to refer to a participant belonging to the control group. Table 1 also shows the mean and the median scores as well as the maximum and the minimum scores obtained in both tests. Finally, the table displays the range of difference between both tests.

**Table 1: Pre-test and Post-test results in the Control Group**

<b>Control Group</b>			
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Pre-Test Score: 20</b>	<b>Post-Test Score: 20</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>C1</b>	10	9	-1
<b>C2</b>	10	12	2
<b>C3</b>	14	16	2
<b>C4</b>	12	14	2
<b>C5</b>	13	15	2
<b>C6</b>	16	17	1
<b>C7</b>	12	13	1
<b>C8</b>	11	14	3
<b>C9</b>	13	16	3
<b>C10</b>	11	12	1
<b>C11</b>	8	10	2
<b>C12</b>	12	15	3
<b>C13</b>	6	8	2
<b>C14</b>	17	18	1
<b>C15</b>	11	12	1
<b>C16</b>	11	13	2
<b>C17</b>	10	13	3
<b>C18</b>	9	12	3
<b>C19</b>	11	12	1
<b>C20</b>	10	13	3
<b>C21</b>	12	14	2
<b>C22</b>	12	14	2
<b>C23</b>	12	15	3
<b>C24</b>	13	14	1
<b>C25</b>	10	13	3
<b>C26</b>	10	14	4
<b>Mean</b>	<b>11.39 56.9%</b>	<b>13.39 66.9%</b>	<b>2 10%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>11 55%</b>	<b>13.5 65%</b>	<b>2.5 10%</b>
<b>Max</b>	<b>17 (1)</b>	<b>18 (1)</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Min</b>	<b>6 (1)</b>	<b>8 (1)</b>	<b>-1</b>

As displayed in Table 1, the majority of participants obtained a rather low score in the pre-test. The results were organized as follows: first, the mean score or average was calculated by adding all the 26 scores and then dividing the total by 26 (Burns 122). As shown in this table, the mean score in the pre-tests is 11.38 (56.9%) approximately, while in the post-test it is 13.39 (66.9%).

There is a small improvement of 2 points in the post-test, which means that the score went up by 10%. Second, the median was calculated. As its name suggests, the median is what comes in as the middle point in a set of numbers arranged from the smallest to the largest (Burns 124). The median score obtained in the pre-test was 11 (55%) while in the post-test was 13.5 (65%). The score went up by 10% as well. Finally, the maximum and the minimum scores are shown in both tests. In the pre-test, the maximum score (17) was obtained once while the minimum score (6) was obtained once as well. In the post-test the maximum score was 18 while the minimum score was 8; both scores were obtained once. As observed, almost all the participants improved their score in the post-test; C1 was the only student who obtained a lower one. His/her score went down by 1 point: from 10 to 9.

## **2.2 Experimental Group**

Table 2 shows the scores over 20 points for each of the participants of the experimental group obtained during the pre- and post-test. The identity of the students is protected by using the letter “E” and a number to refer to a participant belonging to the experimental group. Table 2 also shows the mean and the median scores as well as the maximum and the minimum scores obtained in both tests. Finally, the table displays the range of difference between both tests.

**Table 2: Pre-test and Post-test Results in the Experimental Group**

<b>Experimental</b>			
<b>Group</b>			
<b>Participants</b>	<b>Pre-Test Score: 20</b>	<b>Post-Test Score: 20</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>E1</b>	12	14	2
<b>E2</b>	11	18	7
<b>E3</b>	13	19	6
<b>E4</b>	9	13	4
<b>E5</b>	10	14	4
<b>E6</b>	7	11	4
<b>E7</b>	15	19	4
<b>E8</b>	9	14	5
<b>E9</b>	11	13	2
<b>E10</b>	17	19	2
<b>E11</b>	17	19	2
<b>E12</b>	12	15	3
<b>E13</b>	7	12	5
<b>E14</b>	8	12	4
<b>E15</b>	17	18	1
<b>E16</b>	12	18	6
<b>E17</b>	16	17	1
<b>E18</b>	9	10	1
<b>E19</b>	13	18	5
<b>E20</b>	14	12	-2
<b>E21</b>	11	16	5
<b>E22</b>	12	16	4
<b>E23</b>	13	16	3
<b>E24</b>	7	11	4
<b>E25</b>	15	19	4
<b>E26</b>	14	18	4
<b>Mean</b>	<b>11.96 59.8%</b>	<b>15,42 77.1%</b>	<b>3.46 17.3%</b>
<b>Median</b>	<b>12 60%</b>	<b>16 80%</b>	<b>4 20%</b>
<b>Max</b>	<b>17 (3)</b>	<b>19 (5)</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Min</b>	<b>7 (3)</b>	<b>10 (1)</b>	<b>-2</b>





As displayed in Table 2, similarly to the control group, the majority of participants of the experimental group obtained a somewhat low score in the pre-test. However, after the intervention stage, an important improvement is noticeable. To analyze the results, the mean, the median and the maximum and the minimum score were calculated. First, the mean score in the pre-tests is 11.96 (59.8%) approximately while in the post test is 15.42 (77.1%). There is an important improvement of 3.46 points in the post-test, which means that the score went up by 17.3%, 7.3% more than the control group. Second, the median score obtained in the pre-test was 12 (60%) while in the post-test was 16 (80%). The score went up by 20%, 10% more than in the control group. Finally, the maximum and the minimum scores are shown in both tests. In the pre-test, the maximum score was 17 while the minimum score was 7; both scores were obtained 3 times. In the post-test the maximum score was 19, a high score that is very close to the target one and that was obtained by 5 students. This means a great achievement for the experimental group after receiving the treatment, and reveals that after being part of drama-oriented activities, participants were able to improve their fluency skills. On the other hand, the minimum score was 10 and was obtained by 1 student. As observed, almost all the participants improved their score considerably in the post-test demonstrating that the use of drama-oriented activities was useful to improve their performance in this fluency test. Only 1 student obtained a lower score in the post-test. E20's score went down by 2 points, from 14 to 12.

Table 3 provides an analysis and comparison of the results obtained by both groups in the pre-test and a post-test as described above.

**Table 3: Pre-test and post-test / Control and Experimental Groups**

Control Group				Experimental Group			
Participants	Pre-Test Score: 20	Post-Test Score: 20	Difference	Participants	Pre-Test Score: 20	Post-Test Score: 20	Difference
C1	10	9	-1	E1	12	14	2
C2	10	12	2	E2	11	18	7
C3	14	16	2	E3	13	19	6
C4	12	14	2	E4	9	13	4
C5	13	15	2	E5	10	14	4
C6	16	17	1	E6	7	11	4
C7	12	13	1	E7	15	19	4
C8	11	14	3	E8	9	14	5
C9	13	16	3	E9	11	13	2
C10	11	12	1	E10	17	19	2
C11	8	10	2	E11	17	19	2
C12	12	15	3	E12	12	15	3
C13	6	8	2	E13	7	12	5
C14	17	18	1	E14	8	12	4
C15	11	12	1	E15	17	18	1
C16	11	13	2	E16	12	18	6
C17	10	13	3	E17	16	17	1
C18	9	12	3	E18	9	10	1
C19	11	12	1	E19	13	18	5
C20	10	13	3	E20	14	12	-2
C21	12	14	2	E21	11	16	5
C22	12	14	2	E22	12	16	4
C23	12	15	3	E23	13	16	3
C24	13	14	1	E24	7	11	4
C25	10	13	3	E25	15	19	4
C26	10	14	4	E26	14	18	4
Mean	11.39 56.9%	13.39 66.9%	2 10%	Mean	11.96 59.8%	15.42 77.1%	3.46 17.3%
Median	11 55%	13.5 65%	2.5 10%	Median	12 60%	16 80%	4 20%
Max	17 (1)	18 (1)	4	Max	17 (3)	19 (5)	7
Min	6 (1)	8 (1)	-1	Min	7 (3)	10 (1)	-2

In summary, the experimental group was superior to the control group by 7.3% in the mean and 10% in the median scores. In addition, 5 of the 26 participants of the experimental group achieved the closest score to the target one: 19/20. On the other hand, only 1 participant from the control group obtained the highest score of the group that was 18/20. Furthermore, as shown in Table 3, student E2 showed the greatest improvement in the group; his/her score went up by 7 points: from 11 to 18 in the post-test. The highest improvement in the control group was obtained by C26 whose score went up by

4 points: from 10 to 14; a score that is still somewhat far from the target one. From this comparison, it can be concluded that the experimental group achieved a much higher level of improvement than the control group in the post-test. This may be due to the

confidence students gained during the treatment process by being part of drama-oriented activities which enabled them to use the language and perform orally in a more fluent way.

### **3. Statistical and Descriptive Analysis of the Mean and Median Scores in the Pre- and Post-test**

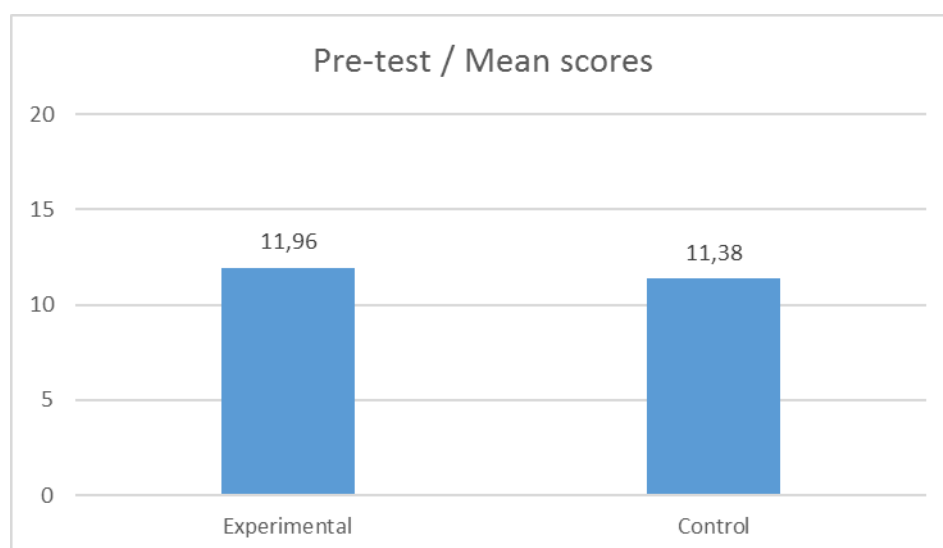
The aim of the following section presents a detailed analysis of the mean and median scores obtained by the control and the experimental group in the pre- and post- oral fluency test.

#### **3.1 Pre-test**

The following figures show the performance of both groups, namely, that of the experimental and the control groups during the oral fluency pre-test comparing the mean and the median scores obtained in the two groups.

##### **3.1.1 Pre-Test / Mean scores**

As stated previously, the mean score or average was calculated by adding all the 26 scores from each group and then dividing the total by 26 (Burns 122).

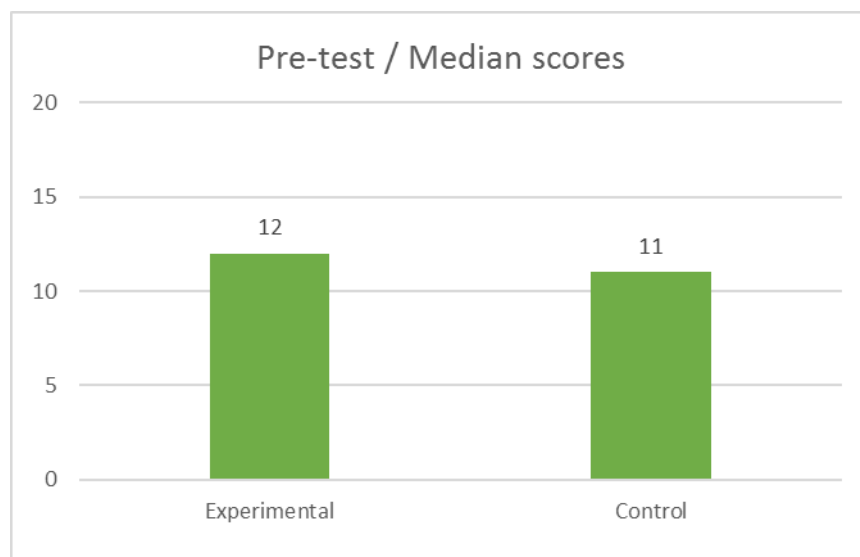


**Figure 1: Pre-Test/ Experimental and control groups' mean scores**

Figure 1 demonstrates that the starting point of both groups was somewhat low regarding their oral fluency performance. The results show that both groups had similar fluency scores before the intervention began. The experimental group obtained 11.96 (59.8%) while the control group obtained 11.38 points (56.9%). These results reveal that the experimental group had a slightly higher score than the control group. The difference between the two groups is approximately 0.57 points which means 2.9%; a result that shows that both groups were homogeneous with a small difference between them.

### **3.1.2 Median Scores**

The median is what comes in as the middle point in a set of numbers arranged from the smallest to the largest (Burns 124). Figure 2 shows the median scores obtained in both groups.



**Figure 2: Pre-Test / Experimental and control groups' median scores**

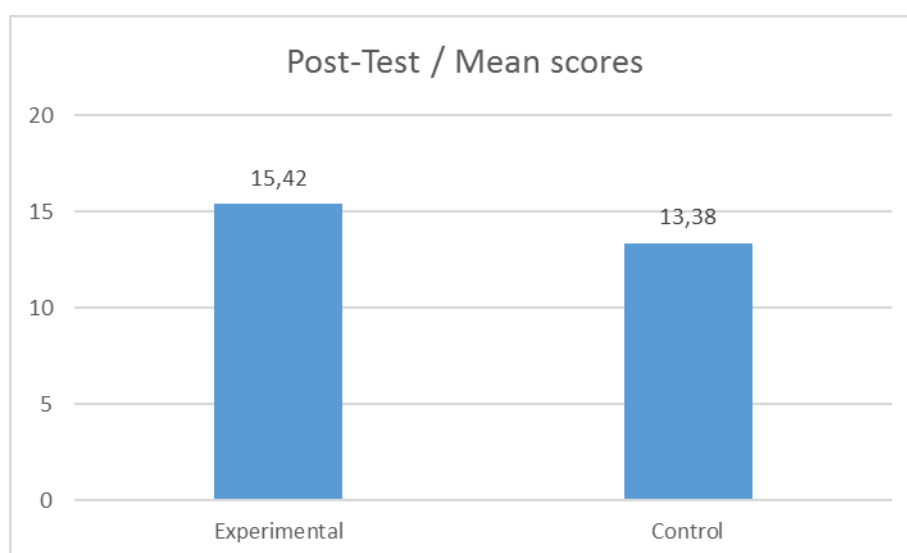
The median score obtained by the experimental group was 12 (60%) while in the control group it was 11 (55%). Similarly to the mean score, this result shows that both groups had comparable oral fluency skills. The difference between the two groups is

relatively small: 1 point (5%). However, the experimental group shows a slightly higher level.

### **3.2 Post-Test**

The following figure shows the mean and median scores obtained by the experimental and the control groups during the administration of the oral fluency post-test. As well as the pre-test, this test was scored over 20 points.

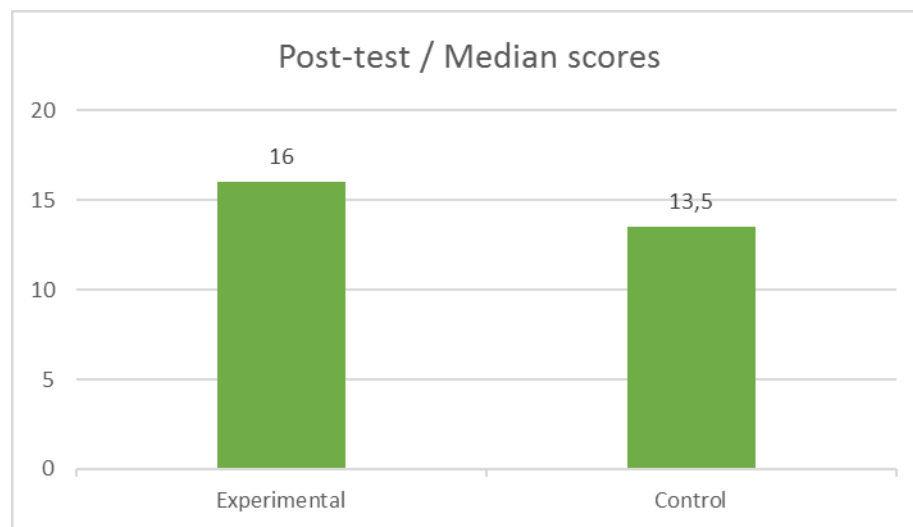
#### **3.2.1 Mean scores**



**Figure 3: Post-test / Experimental and control groups' mean score**

As shown in Figure 3, the experimental group obtained a mean score of 15.42 in the post test (77.1%) while the control group obtained a mean score of 13.38 (66.9%). The difference between these groups is 2.04 points (10.2%). Comparing this result with that of the pre-test, in which the difference between the two groups was 0.57 (2.9%), it can be concluded that the experimental group's performance was higher than that of the control group.

### **3.2.2. Post-test – median scores**



**Figure 4: Post-test / Experimental and Control groups' median scores**

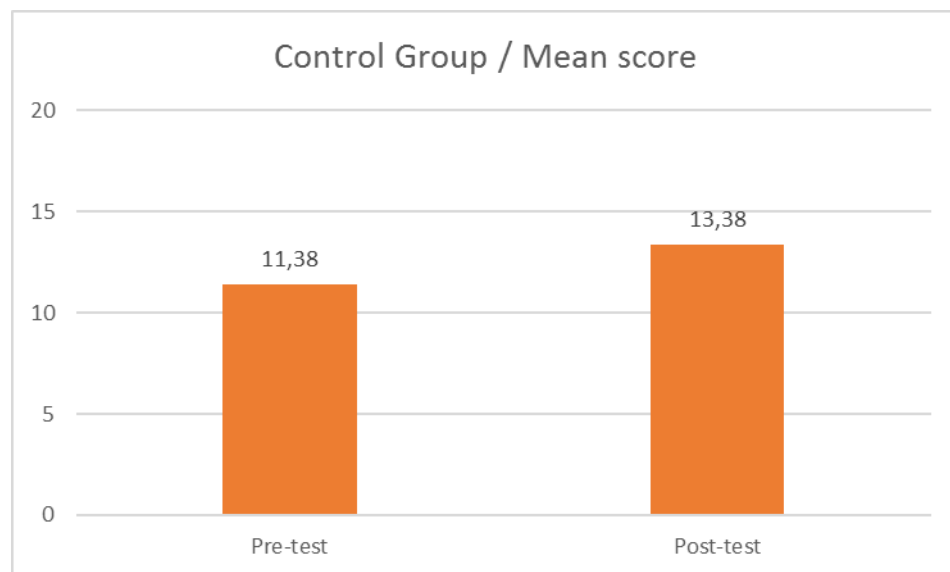
Figure 4 shows that the median score obtained in the post-test by the experimental group was 16 (80%) while the median score obtained by the control group was 13.5 (67.5%).

The difference, of the scores between both groups is 2.5 points (12.5%). If this result is compared with that of the pre-test, in which the difference between both groups was 1 point (5%), it can be concluded that the experimental group's performance in the post test was substantially higher than that of the control group.

## **4. Statistical and Descriptive Analysis of Results by Groups: Control and Experimental**

The following analysis shows the development of each group by comparing the mean and median scores corresponding to the pre- and post-test in each group.

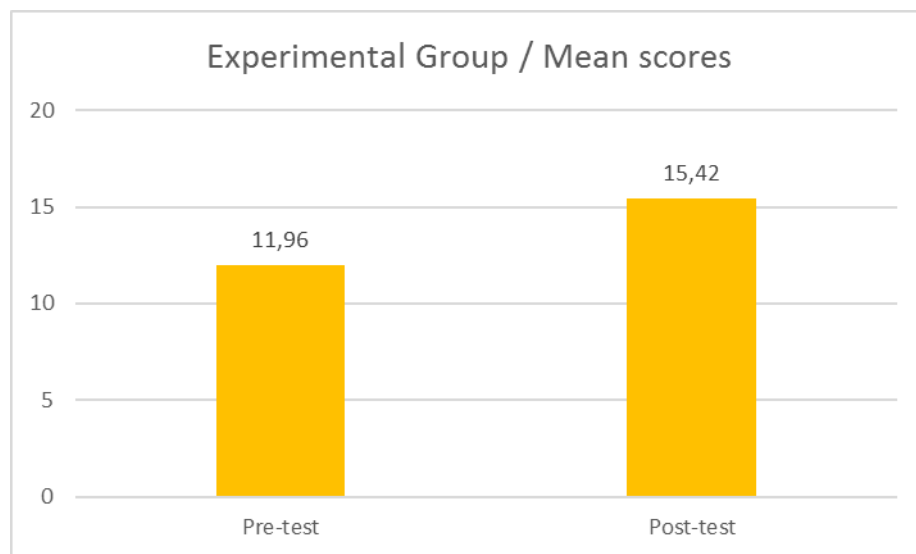
#### **4.1 Analysis of the mean scores in the Control Group**



**Figure 5: Control group / pre- and post-test analysis of the mean scores**

The mean scores in Figure 5 show that the control group obtained 11.38 over 20 points (56.9%) in the pre-test. This score confirms that the oral performance of the group before the intervention was fairly low. In the post-test, the group's performance went up by 2 points (10%) by obtaining 13.38 points (66.9%). Undeniably, the control group did improve their performance by exactly two points (out of 20), which amounts to a respectable 10% rise.

## **4.2 Analysis of the Mean Scores in the Experimental Group**

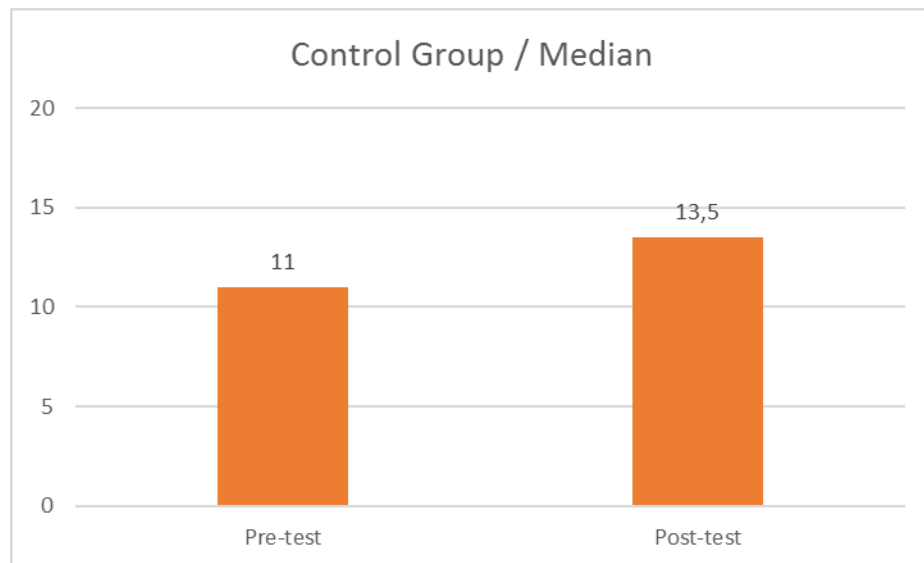


**Figure 6: Experimental group / pre- and post-test analysis of mean scores**

Figure 6 illustrates that the experimental group obtained 11.96 points over 20 (59.8%) in the pre-test. Similarly to the results of the control group, this score shows that the experimental group had a fairly low oral performance level before the intervention stage. After the treatment, the group obtained 15.42 points (77.1%). It means that the experimental group's oral fluency went up by 3.46 points (17.3%); a result that confirms that this group made a much greater progress in the post-test compared to that of the control group.



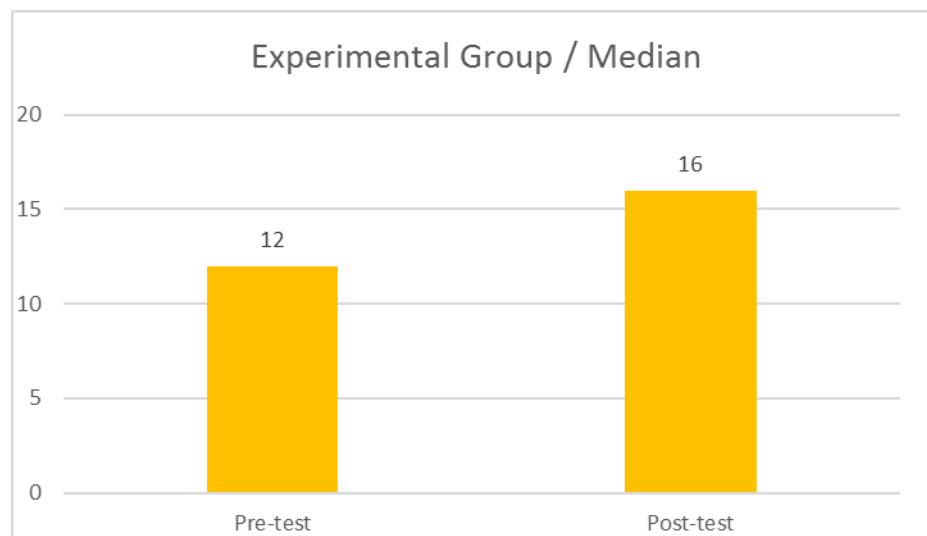
### **4.3 Analysis of the Median in the Control Group**



**Figure 7: Control group / pre-test and post-test analysis of the median scores**

The median scores in Figure 7 show that the group's oral fluency performance rose from 11 (55%) in the pre-test to a moderate improvement of 13.5 (67.5%) in the post-test. In other words, their oral fluency performance went up by 1.5 points (12.5 %). This evidence may imply that even though the group did not receive any treatment, it achieved some progress in the post-test.

#### **4.4 Analysis of the Median in the Experimental Group**



**Figure 8: Experimental group / pre-test and post-test analysis of the median**

Figure 8 displays the median scores of the experimental group that obtained 12 points (60%) in the pre-test and 16 (80%) in the post-test. This evidence may imply that after being part of the treatment, the experimental group's oral fluency skills improved considerably in comparison with the control group. The improvement achieved at the end of the intervention is 4 points (20%) in the experimental group and 2.5 (12.5%) in the control.

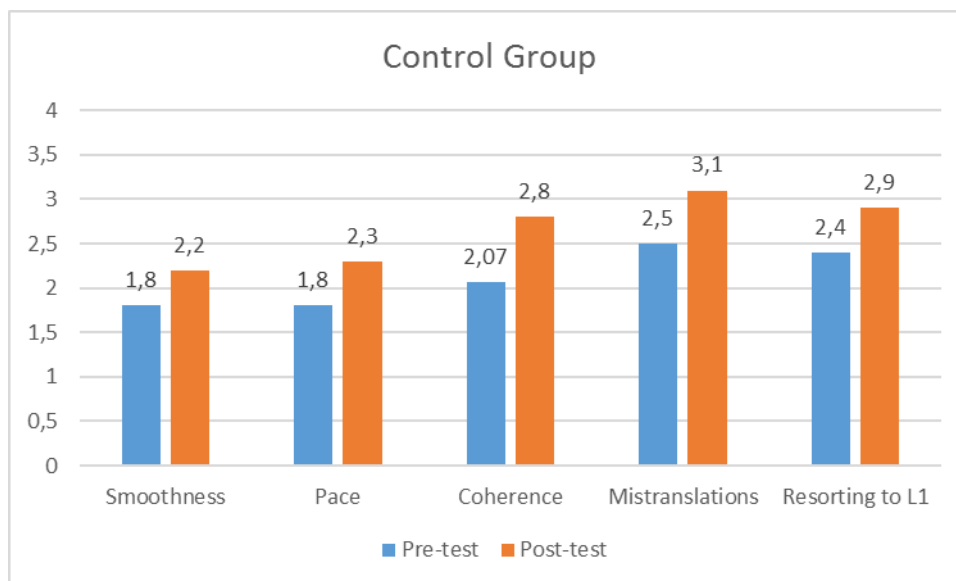
### **5. Fluency Parameters Development**

The following analysis aims at describing the development that both the control and the experimental groups showed on the five oral fluency parameters using the rubric to score fluency; it also evaluates the parameters' scope and limitations.

Both the pre- and post-test rubrics were based on five oral fluency parameters: 1) smoothness; 2) pace; 3) coherence and amount of speech; 4) mistranslations; and 5) resorting to L1. Each of these skills was scored over 4 points which gives us an overall result of 20 points for oral fluency performance.

## **5.1 Control Group**

Figure 9 displays how participants performed in each of these 5 parameters.



**Figure 9: Control Group / parameters development**

It can be observed that in the post-test, the group showed progress in each of the parameters; however, this progress is rather small. In the next section, each of these 5 parameters will be analyzed in detail.

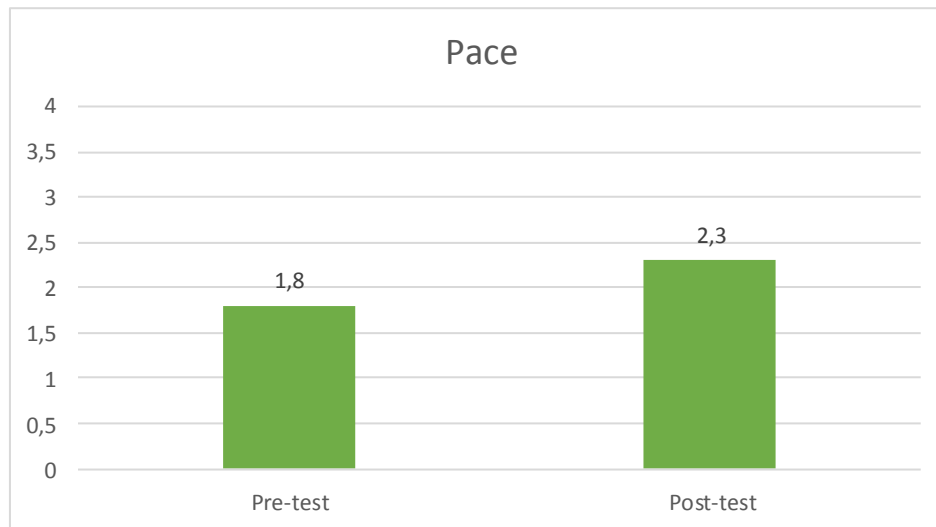
### **5.1.1 Smoothness**



**Figure 10: Smoothness / parameters development / Control group**

As mentioned before in Chapter II, smoothness pertains to the capacity of the speaker to express his/her ideas smoothly without or with minimal hesitations or pauses. As shown in Figure 10, the participants obtained a low score in the pre-test: 1.8 (45%) over 4 points. This suggests that they had problems expressing their ideas smoothly. In fact, their speech contained a lot of pauses and hesitations that usually interfered with communication. In the post-test, on the other hand, the participants showed some progress by obtaining 2.2 points (55%). Their performance regarding smoothness went up by 0.4 points (10%); a result that shows that the participants in the control group still had problems in expressing themselves smoothly.

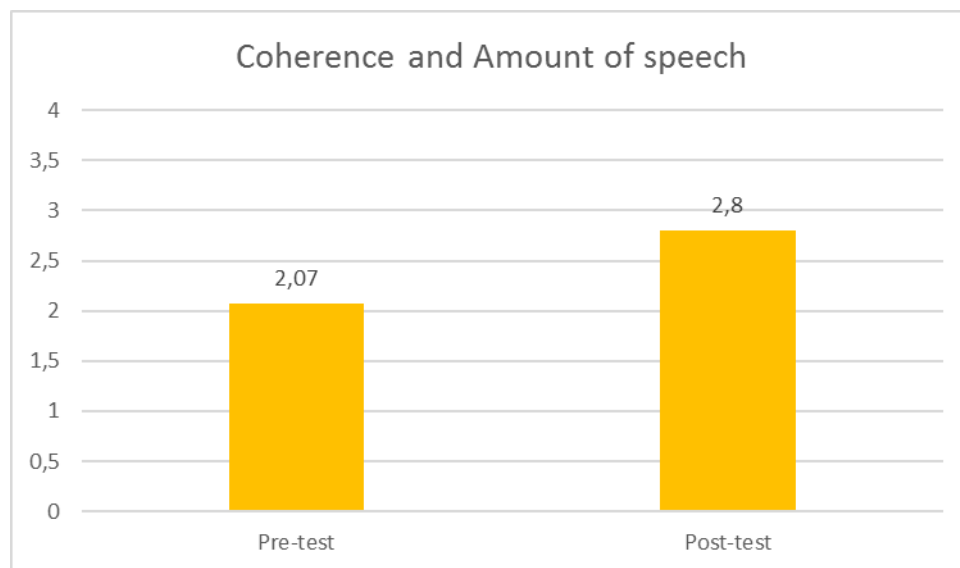
### **5.1.2 Pace**



**Figure 11: Pace / Parameters development / Control Group**

Pace refers to the capacity of the speaker to communicate at a conversational speed. As shown in Figure 11, the participants obtained a low score in the pre-test: 1.8 (45%) over 4 points. This result reveals that the students did not feel confident when speaking, and that their conversational speed or pace was very slow. The participants usually expressed themselves at a very slow speed that sometimes interfered with communication or turned the conversation dull. In the post-test, the participants' performance went up by 0.5 (12.5%) points by obtaining 2.3 points (57.5%); this implies that the students made some progress in developing this skill.

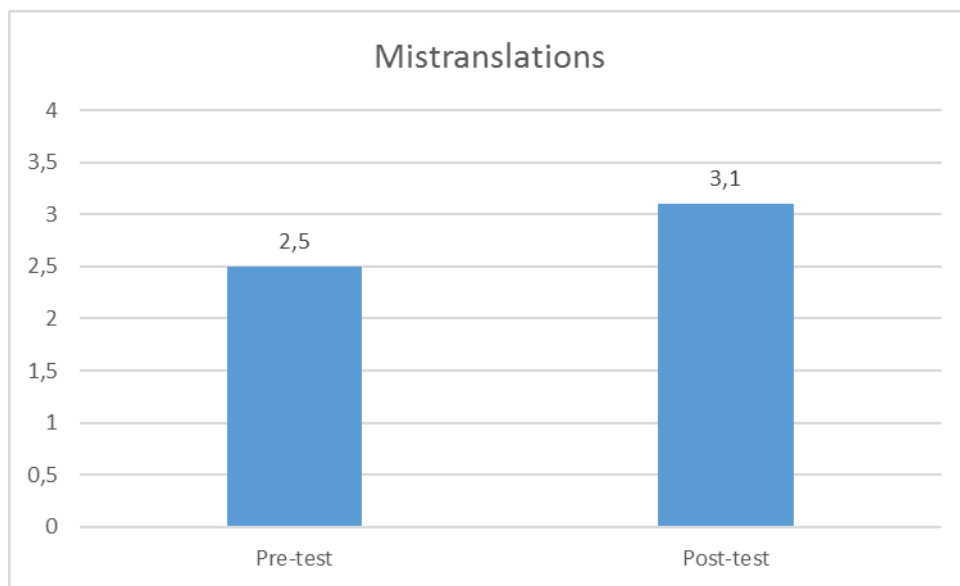
### **5.1.3 Coherence and Amount of Speech**



**Figure 12: Coherence and Amount of Speech / Parameters development / Control Group**

Coherence refers to the ability of the interlocutors to express themselves logically, and keeping to the main topic of the conversation. In addition, the amount of speech measures the quantity of speech they are able to produce in order to convey their thoughts. In this section, as displayed in Figure 12, the participants obtained 2.07 (51.75%) in the pre-test. This score shows that the students had difficulties in expressing their ideas coherently, or what they said was not enough to complete an answer that could agree with the topic of the conversation. In the post-test, however, the participants achieved a rather significant improvement by obtaining 2.8 points (70%). The difference between the pre- and the post-test is 0.73 (18.3%). Comparing this progress with the scores the participants obtained in the previous skills, the students progressed a lot. However, the result is still not that close to the target of 4 points.

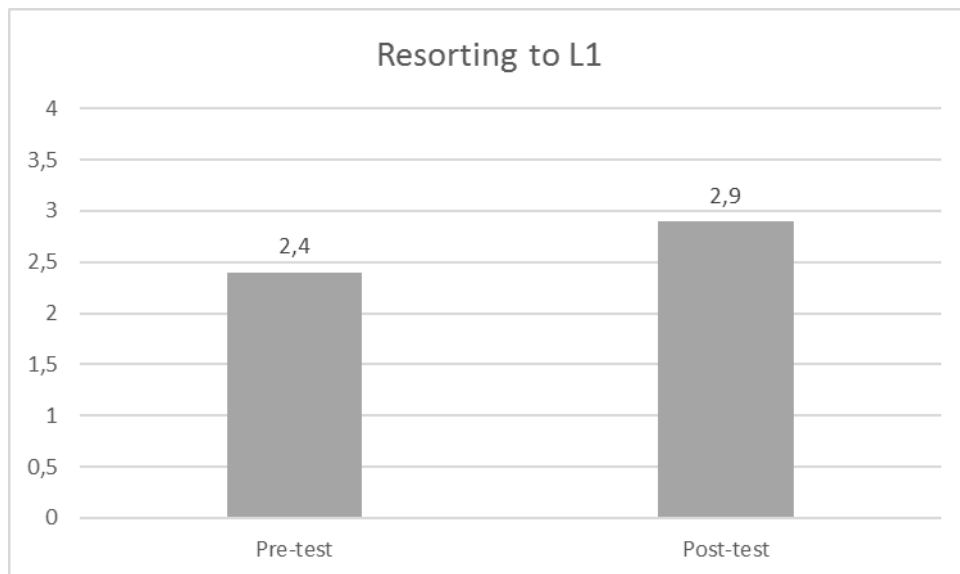
#### **5.1.4 Mistranslations**



**Figure 13: Mistranslations / Parameters development / Control Group**

Figure 13 demonstrates that the students obtained 2.5 (62.5%) points in the category of mistranslations. This section of the rubric refers to the speakers' ability to express him/ herself avoiding the use of mistranslated words from their mother tongue to English. The result they obtained in the pre-test shows that the participants used some mistranslated word such as actually (*actualmente* in Spanish) to mean *nowadays*, and invented or created words based on Spanish such as "divert" (*divertirse* in Spanish) to mean *to have fun*. In the post-test, the participants managed to obtain 3.1 points (77.5%), which implies an improvement of 0.6 points (15%). This result shows that the use of mistranslated words was reduced in the post-test.

### 5.1.5 Resorting to L1



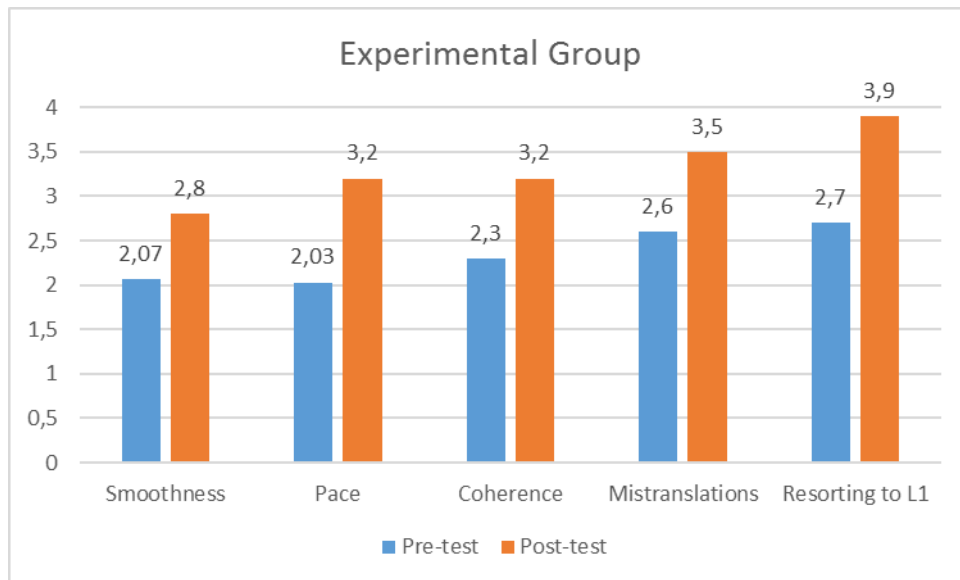
**Figure 14: Resorting to L1 / Parameters development / Control Group**

In this section of the rubric, the participants were evaluated on the ability to express their ideas and thoughts without using any words, or fillers in their mother tongue, i.e. in Spanish. As shown in Figure 14, the participants resorted to using some Spanish in order to fill pauses or to express ideas or words they did not know in English. Some examples would be nice here. In the pre-test, the control group obtained 2.4 points (60%). In the post-test, the group managed to obtain a somewhat higher score: 2.9 points (72.5%). The participants' performance went up by 0.5 points (12.5%). This means that in the post-test, the participants used fewer fillers and words in Spanish. Even though the group made some progress, the post-test score still falls below the target level of 4 points.



## **5.2 Experimental Group**

The following analysis shows the experimental group's performance in the 5 parameters mentioned above: 1) smoothness; 2) pace; 3) coherence and amount of speech; 4) mistranslations; and 5) resorting to L1.



**Figure 15: Experimental group / Parameters development**

As shown in Figure 15, the experimental group made a significant progress in most of the parameters displayed in the bars. Each of these parameters will be analyzed in detail in the next section.

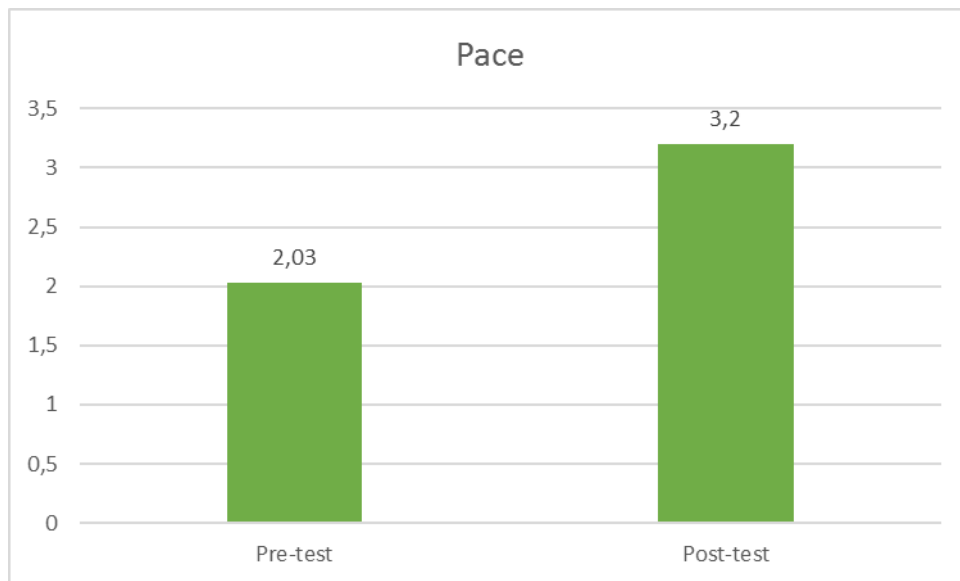
### **5.2.1 Smoothness**



**Figure 16: Smoothness / Parameters development / Experimental Group**

In the pre-test, as shown in Figure 16, the participants of the experimental group obtained a mean score of 2.07 (51.8%). This result implies that similarly to the control group, the experimental group found it difficult to express themselves smoothly and their speech usually contained some pauses and hesitations that on certain occasions interfered with communication. After the intervention stage, however, the group showed some improvement by obtaining 2.8 points (70%). This score reveals that the group's performance in this regard went up by 0.7 points (18.3 %). If this result is compared with that of the control group displayed in Figure 10, it can be noticed that the control group improved by 10% while the experimental group by 18.25%. This means that the experimental group surpassed the control group by 8.25% showing that the experimental group's improvement was more significant in this skill.

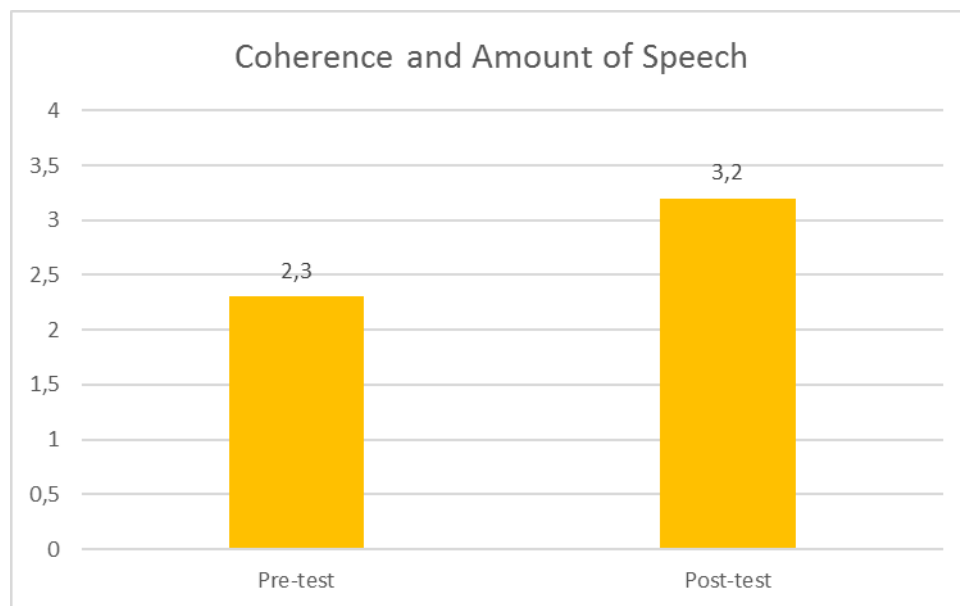
### **5.2.2 Pace**



**Figure 17: Pace / Parameters development / Experimental Group**

Figure 17 shows that during the pre-test, the participants obtained a fairly low score in this parameter: 2.03 (50.8%). This means that the students struggled to speak at a normal conversational speed. Nonetheless, after the intervention stage, the participants showed a considerable improvement in this regard. They managed to obtain 3.2 points in the post-test, which amounts to 80% of the total score; a result that is relatively close to the target. Their performance in this parameter went up by 30% in the post-test. The control group improved by 12.5% (Fig. 11). This means that the experimental group achieved a much higher improvement surpassing the control group by 17.5%. This implies that at the end of the intervention process, the students improved their ability to speak at a normal conversational pace.

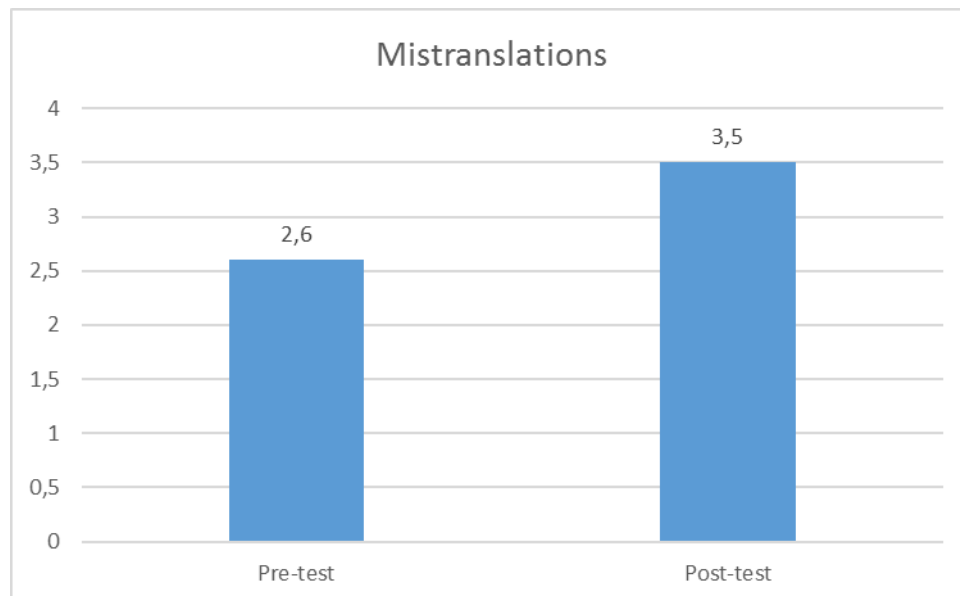
### **5.2.3 Coherence and Amount of Speech**



**Figure 18: Coherence and Amount of Speech – Parameters development – Experimental Group**

As displayed in Figure 18, during the pre-test the participants' speech showed certain weaknesses regarding coherence. This means that some students' answers did not keep to the main topic of the conversation, or their contained illogical elements. This was duly reflected in the score they obtained in the pre-test: 2.3 over 4 points which gives us 57.5% of the total score. However, after the participants received the treatment, their score went up by 22.5% obtaining 3.2 points (80%). This result reveals that at the end of the intervention stage, the participants were able to speak more coherently and logically, and their answers agreed with the main topic of the conversation satisfactorily. Comparing the progress the experimental group was able to make with that of the control group displayed in Figure 12, it can be concluded that the participants in the experimental group achieved better results in this parameter, too. While the experimental group's performance went up by 22.5%, that of the control group increased by 18.3% only.

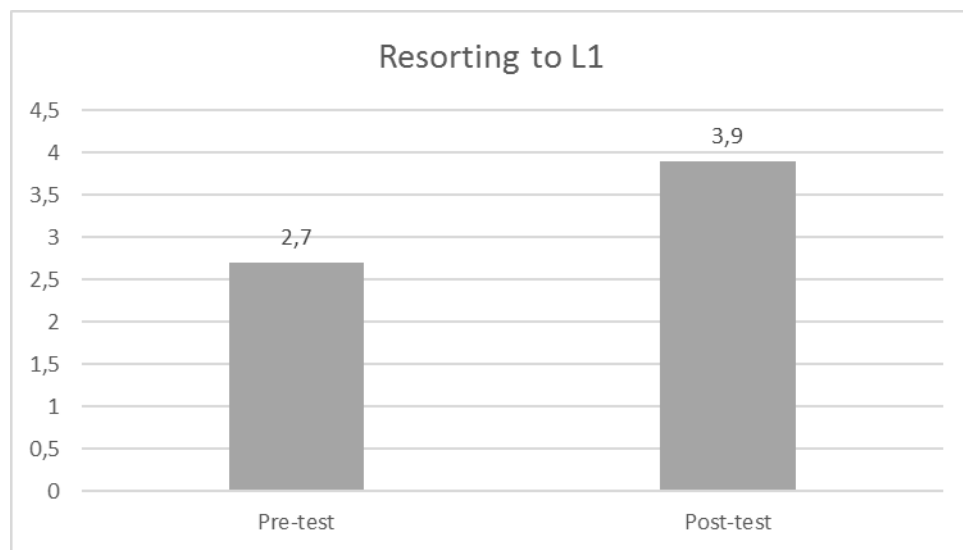
#### **5.1.4 Mistranslations**



**Figure 19: Mistranslations / Parameters development / Experimental group**

Figure 19 shows the experimental group's performance in the pre- and post-test regarding the use of language without using mistranslated words. In the pre-test, it can be observed that the students' speech showed a few mistranslations that did not usually interfere with communication. The score the participants obtained in this stage was 2.6 (65%). Nonetheless, after being part of the drama-oriented activities, the students showed more confidence with the language and improved their vocabulary. This is reflected in their performance in the post-test by obtaining 3.5 (87.5%). This score shows excellent language management skills since the score is very close to the target. The participants' performance went up by 22.5%. If this result is compared with that of the control group displayed in Figure 13, it can be concluded that the experimental group made definitely more progress than the control group whose performance went up by 15%.

### **5.1.5 Resorting to L1**

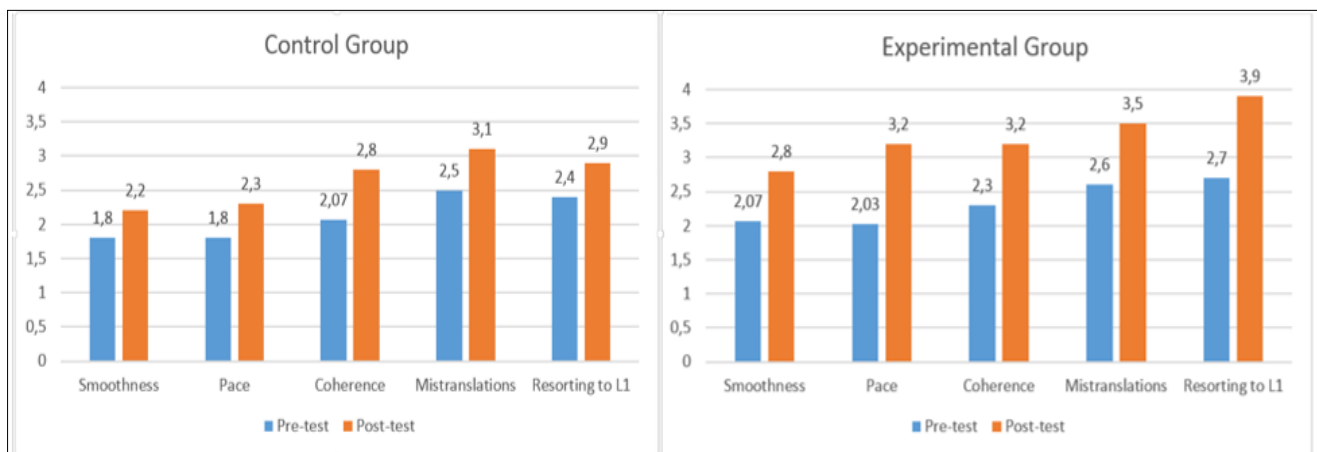


**Figure 20: Resorting to L1 / Parameters development / Experimental group**

Figure 20 displays how participants performed in the pre- and post- test without falling back into their mother tongue or resorting to L1 fillers. In the pre-test, students barely used L1 to express their ideas, and their speech did not show much use of L1 fillers either. In this parameter, the participants obtained 2.7 (67.5%) points for the pre-test, which means that students made an effort to use English only. After the intervention stage, the participants further improved their fluency skills regarding this parameter and obtained 3.9 points (97.5%), a result that is quite outstanding and close to the target score of 4. Their performance went up by 30% while the control group improved by 12.5%. Once again, this shows that at the end of the intervention, the experimental group gained more confidence with the language and progressed more than the control group.

### 5.3 Summary of the Analysis of Fluency Parameters in Both Groups

This section provides a short summary of the main findings regarding the 5 parameters used in the speaking rubrics to score fluency during the pre- and the post-test in the control and the experimental group.



**Figure 21: Control and Experimental group / Parameters analysis**

These 5 parameters were analyzed one by one in the former section, and as shown in Figure 21, it can be concluded that at the end of the intervention stage, the experimental group achieved a higher score in all the parameters. In the pre-test, the main weaknesses in both groups had to do with *smoothness* and *pace*. At the end of the intervention, both groups improved; nevertheless, the experimental group reached a higher score in all the parameters. Figure 21 illustrates how both groups improved their scores in the post-test. The control group's highest improvement regards *coherence*: it increased from 2.07 to 2.8 points. This means that the score went up by 18.25%. In addition, the closest score to the target that the control group managed to obtain was in the *mistranslations* parameter: 3.1/4. The biggest improvement the experimental group achieved was regarding *Pace* and *Resorting to L1*, where the scores went from 2.03 to 3.2 and from 2.7 to 3.9 respectively. This means that the scores increased by

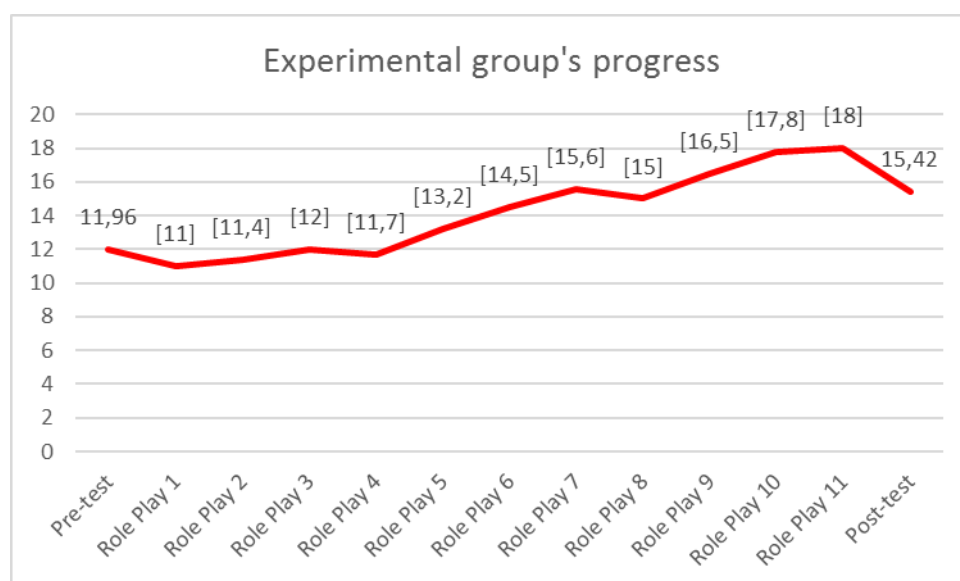
approximately 30% in both parameters. In addition, the closest score to the target that this group managed to obtain was in *Resorting to L1* parameter: 3.9/4.

## 6. The Impact of Drama-Oriented Activities to Improve Oral Fluency

This section is intended to analyze and describe the impact that the use of drama-oriented activities had in the experimental group in order to improve oral fluency skills.

### 6.1 Analysis and Description of Role Play Performances

The following graph illustrates the impact of applying drama-oriented activities in an EFL classroom in order to improve oral fluency. When describing the methodology of the study, it was mentioned that during the students' performance of each role play, a rubric was used to score each performance in order to check the participants' progress along the process (see Annex 8). Thus, the results shown below display the mean score that the experimental group obtained in the pre-test, the mean score obtained during the treatment in each of the 11 role plays the participants were part of, and finally the mean score obtained in the post-test. Since the role plays differ in nature and structure from the pre-test and post-test, their scores are displayed in brackets to show that difference.



**Figure 22: Experimental group's progress**



As shown in the line graph, the participants' progress during the treatment with drama-oriented activities was not linear. In fact, there were peaks and troughs during the treatment starting from 11.96 (59.8%) in the pre-test and achieving 15.42 (77.1%) in the post-test. Figure 22 shows that the participants' performance was somewhat low during the first session. However, their performance started to rise to a reasonable average in the following sessions. In fact, it can be noticed that in the last role plays (10 and 11), participants obtained a score that was very close to the target. Their score in the last 2 sessions were 17.8 (89%) and 18 (90%) over 20 points, a result that reveals that the students made a great improvement during the role play performances showing confidence and improvement of oral skills. Nonetheless, as the post-test was not based on role plays performances, the post-test result shows a fall in the score from 18 to 15.42 (77.1%).

Even though the post-test mean score was not so close to the top score as the mean scores of the last sessions were, there was a considerable progress in the group with a difference of 3, 46 points (17.3%) between the pre-test and the post-test mean scores.

## **6.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Video**

As described in Chapter II outlining the methodology used in this study, the participants of the experimental group also created a short video. This activity was part of a final project where students created their own script or story and then filmed it for a short video. In order to carry out this project, the 26 students of the experimental group were divided into 5 smaller groups. The five final videos were scored over 20 points by using a rubric (see Annex 9) which aimed to mark the 5 main parameters over 4 points each: 1) smoothness and pace; 2) content and creativity; 3) performance; 4) mistranslations; and 5) resorting to L1.

The following table is a summary of the video performance of each group.

**Table 4: Video performance / Experimental group**

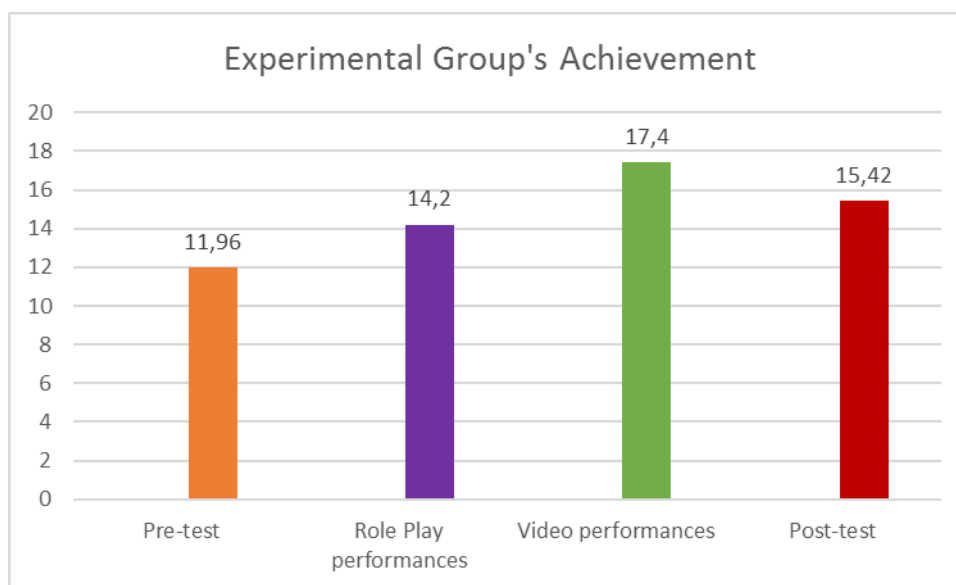
Parameters Video	Smoothness and Pace	Content and Creativity	Performance	Mistranslations	Resorting to L1	TOTAL: 20 pts
Group 1	2	3	4	3	4	16
Group 2	3	3	4	4	4	18
Group 3	3	3	4	3	4	17
Group 4	3	4	4	4	4	19
Group 5	3	3	3	4	4	17
MEAN	2.8	3.2	3.8	3.6	4	17.4
%	70%	80%	95%	90%	100%	87%

As displayed in Table 4, the five groups obtained a satisfactory score in the videos they created as part of their final project. The lowest score is 16/20 while the highest is 19/20, a score that is very close to the target. The weakness in all groups had to do with smoothness and pace. It also seems that participants still encountered problems with expressing themselves or performing at a normal conversational pace and their performance included some pauses and hesitations. However, these did not interfere with communication and their oral performance in the videos was satisfactory with a mean score of 2.8/4 (70%). A weakness that the groups were able to overcome at the end of the intervention stage was *Resorting to L1*. In this section, all the groups obtained the top score 4/4

(100 %). Finally, the mean score for the video performances is 17.4 which represents 87% of the total score. These results seem to show a considerable improvement in the performance of the drama-oriented activities that participants were part of.

### **6.3 Experimental Group's General Achievement**

In this section, the mean scores obtained during the pre-test, the intervention stage (role play and video performances), and the post-test will be presented in a bar graph.



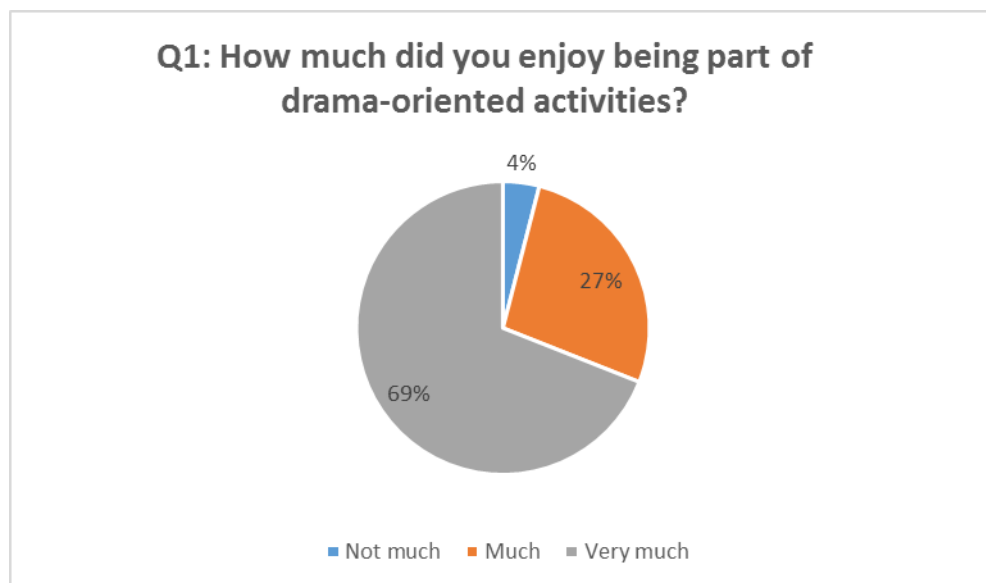
**Figure 23: Experimental Group's achievement**

Figure 23 displays the mean scores that the experimental group obtained before, during and after receiving the treatment. The orange bar shows the score obtained in the pre-test, the purple one the mean score obtained from the rubrics of the 11 role plays students performed during the intervention process, the green bar provides the mean score obtained from the rubrics of the 5 videos students filmed as their final project, and finally, the red bar represents the final score obtained in the post test. The group's post-test results were higher than those of the pre-test and the students achieved better results in the video-making activity than in the role plays.

## 7. Descriptive Analysis of the Experimental Group's Attitudes towards Drama-oriented Activities

This section aims to provide information about the benefits that the use of drama-oriented activities brought to the participants of the experimental group. The information that is displayed in this section was obtained from the final questionnaire (see Annex 10) administered to the students at the end of the intervention stage. The questionnaire was designed to collect information about the feelings and attitudes the participants had towards the use of drama-oriented activities. As a way of triangulating the data, it was deemed important to find out directly from the protagonists how they felt during the treatment and if they thought they had benefitted from the process to any extent.

### 7.1 Q1: How much did participants enjoy being part of drama-oriented activities

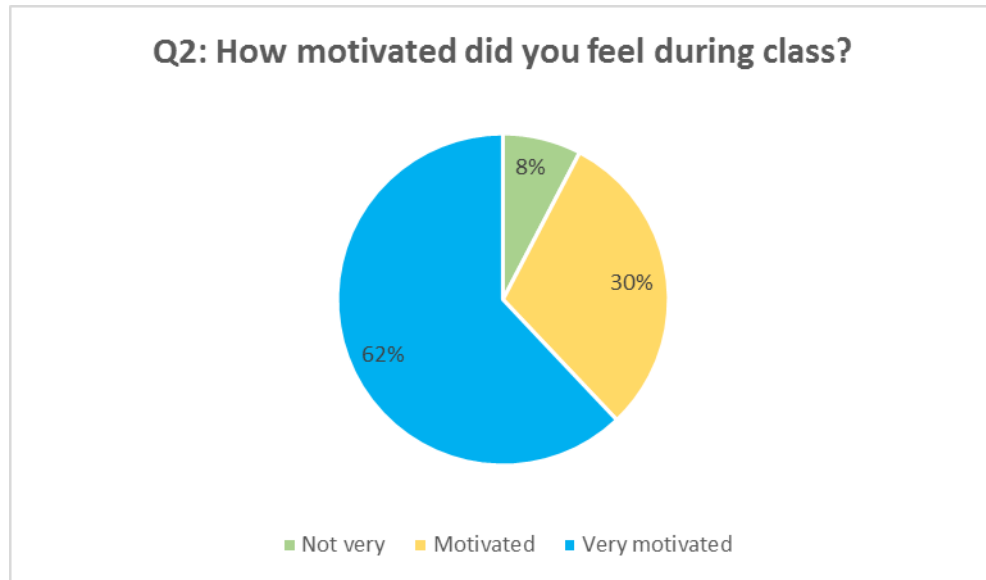


**Figure 24: How much did participants enjoy being part of drama-oriented activities?**

Figure 24 displays the participants' answers to the first question of the final questionnaire. In this question, students were asked to express how much they enjoyed being part of drama-oriented activities. As is shown in the figure, the majority of the students, namely, 69% (which means 18 of the 26 participants), stated that they enjoyed these kinds of activities very much.

Twenty-seven per cent (7 participants) responded that they enjoyed it much and a 4% minority (1 student) stated he/she did not enjoy them much.

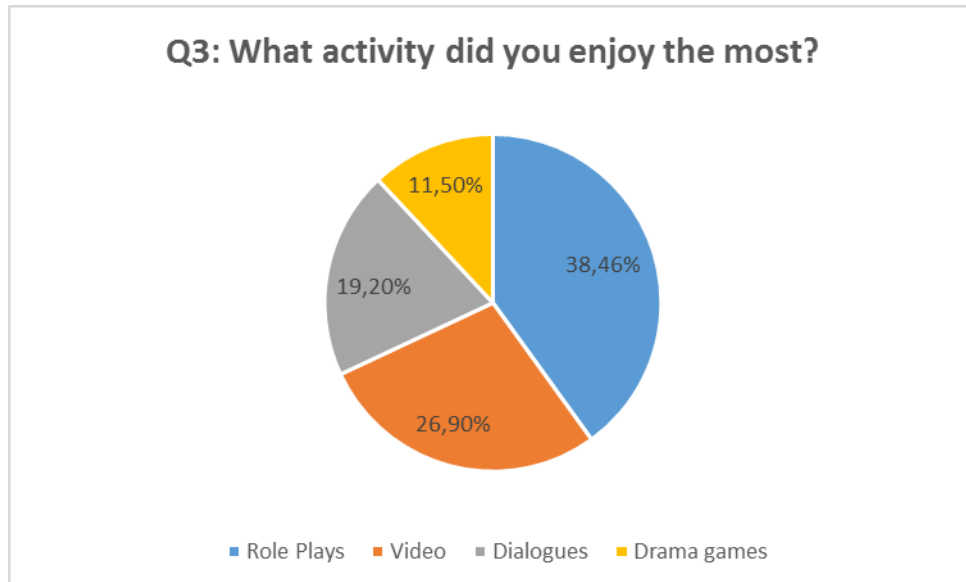
## **7.2 Q2: How motivated were students during class?**



**Figure 25: Participants' motivation during class**

This question was designed to obtain information from the participants about how they felt during class, which may have affected their motivation. As shown in Figure 25, 62% of the class said that they felt very motivated during class. Thirty per cent (8 participants) responded that they felt motivated, and finally, 8% (2 students) stated they did not feel very motivated during class.

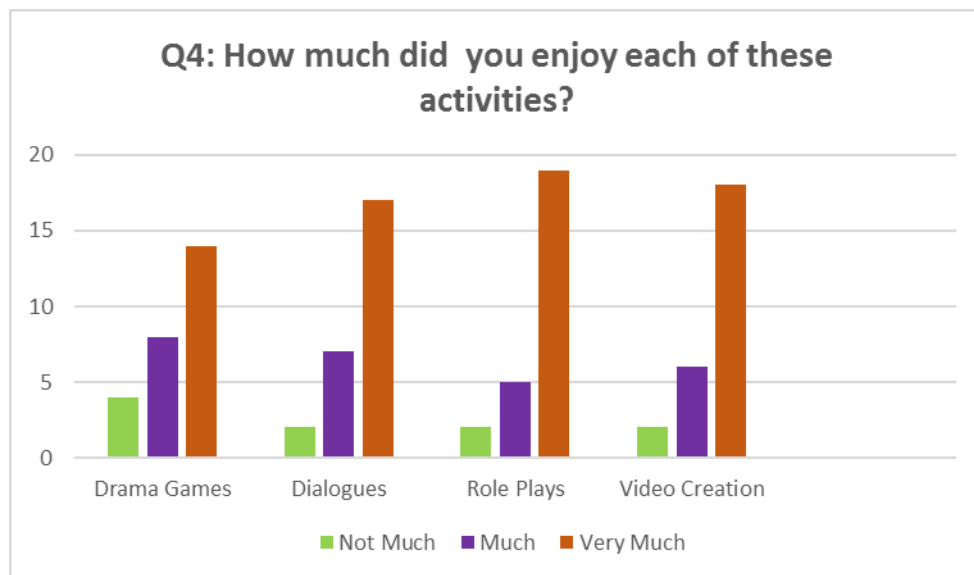
### 7.3 Q3: What activity did you enjoy the most?



**Figure 26: What activity did participants enjoy the most?**

In this question, participants were asked to number the following drama-oriented activities: *role plays*, *video creation*, *dialogues* and *drama games* from 1 to 4. Number 1 stood for the activity they enjoyed the most while 4, for the one they enjoyed the least. Figure 26 shows that the activity most enjoyed by participants was *role plays*; 38.5% marked it as their favorite one, in second place was *video creation* with 26.9%, in third place *dialogues* with 19.2%, and finally *drama games* with 11.5%.

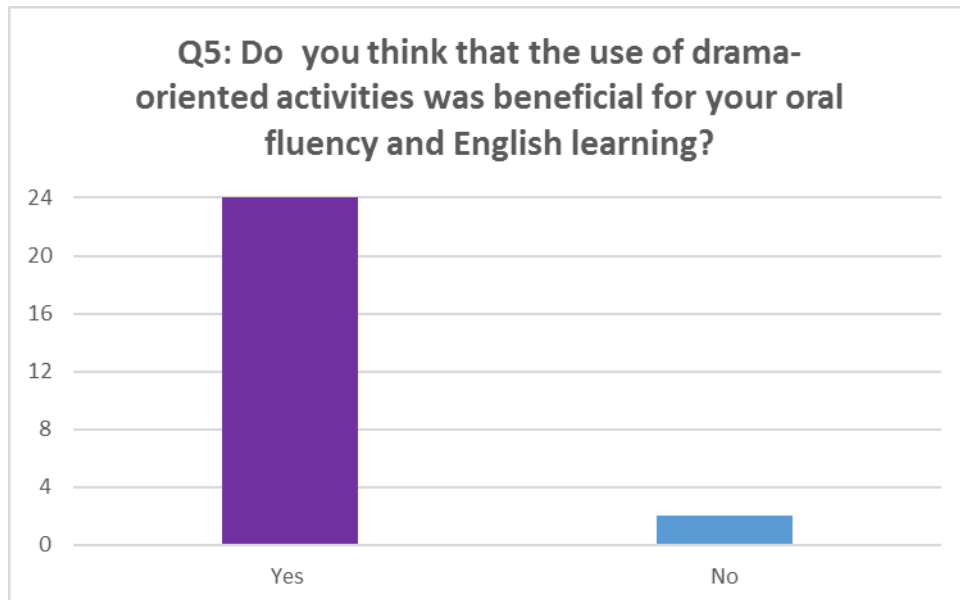
#### **7.4 Q4: How much did participants enjoy each of the activities?**



**Figure 27: How much did participants enjoy each of the activities?**

In Question 4, students were asked to state how much they enjoyed each of the drama-oriented activities they were part of during the intervention stage. As shown in Figure 27, it seems that most students really enjoyed all these kinds of activities. Fourteen to nineteen students stated to have enjoyed all of them very much. Five to eight participants stated to have enjoyed them much and finally 2 to 4 students said they did not enjoy them very much. The figure shows that the activities that the majority of them enjoyed the most were *role plays* and *video creation*.

### **7.5 Q5: Was the use of drama-oriented activities beneficial for participants' oral fluency and English**



**Figure 28: Were drama-oriented activities beneficial for participants' English learning?**

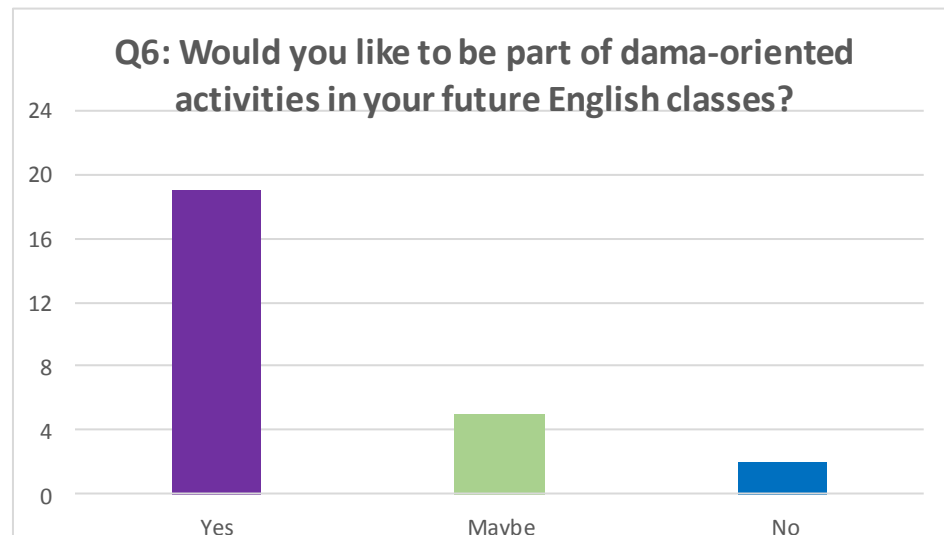
The figure above displays students' answer to Question 5 of the final questionnaire. In this section, participants were asked if, in their opinion, the use of drama-oriented activities were beneficial for their English learning or not. To this question, most of the participants (24) responded that they were, while a minority (2 students) expressed that they were not useful for them.



## **7.6. learning?**

### **7.7 Q6: Would participants like to be part of drama-oriented activities in their future**

#### **English classes**



**Figure 29: Would participants like to be part of drama-oriented activities in their future English classes?**

In Question 6, students were asked if they would like to be part of drama-oriented activities in their future English classes. As is displayed in Figure 29, nineteen students answered yes, five said maybe and 2 no.

## **8. Discussion**

The research questions that were posed at the beginning of this study will be discussed in this section in consideration of the main findings of this research.

The findings of this study were centered on the enhancement and improvement of oral fluency skills through the use of drama-oriented activities such as drama games, dialogues, role plays and the creation of a short video. The general achievements of the

Lcda. Andrea Belén Chérrez Sacoto



study will be discussed first. Then, the results of the treatment process will be commented on and continued with the implications of the five fluency parameters used in the rubric to score the pre- and post-test. Finally, additional results regarding the students' feelings and attitudes towards drama-oriented activities and the use of the foreign language will be incorporated.

*Research Questions: To what degree does the application of drama-oriented activities improve students' oral fluency skills? What benefits do the participants obtain from the use of drama-oriented activities in the classroom regarding oral fluency skills?*

The answers to these questions were presented in the analysis and comparison of the progress achieved regarding oral fluency skills each of the two groups. Thus, the analysis showed a major improvement in the experimental group in which the pre-test mean score 11.96 (59.8%) went up to 15.42 points (77.1%) in the post-test. At the same time, the control group's pre-test mean score 11.38 (56.9%) went up to 13.38 points (66.9%). This means that while the experimental group improved by 17.3%, the control group improved by only 10% revealing a 7.3% range of difference between the two groups (see Table 3).

The starting point was set by the results of the pre-test which showed that the two groups were fairly comparable as they had very similar low scores: while the control group obtained 11.38, the experimental group achieved 11.96 points over 20. The experimental group's results were slightly higher than those of the control group by 0.58 points, which constitutes 2.9% (see Table 3). Then, as mentioned in previous chapters, the control group did not receive any treatment its participants only participated in the regular classes following the set syllabus. As opposed to this, the experimental group was asked to perform a range of drama-oriented activities.

Throughout this treatment stage, the students participated in different activities such as drama games, dialogues, role plays and the creation of a short video. In order to obtain



the data on which this discussion is based, the focus of the statistics was on the 11 role plays and the final video which were observed and scored over 20 points. As Figure 22 shows, in the first role play that the students acted out, the participants obtained 11 points, namely, a lower score than that of the pre-test. This might have happened due to what a first session performance implies: the students' nervousness and lack of confidence when asked to do role plays and acting. In fact, as it came out of the results of the preliminary questionnaire that the students were asked to fill in, (see Annex 3), some of the participants said that they had never been part of drama-oriented activities in the classroom, and several others expressed reluctance to be part of these kinds of activities. Thus, the first scores for the first session may reflect these feelings and attitudes. In the subsequent sessions, it can be observed how the group's score gradually increased. However, there were some peaks and troughs during this progress as seen in Session 4 and 8, where the scores decreased slightly: from 12 to 11.7 and from 15.6 to 15, respectively. Nonetheless, the participants showed a great improvement in the last 2 sessions, obtaining 17.8 (89%) and 18 points (90%) respectively. These results are very close to the maximum and demonstrate how students gained confidence when using the foreign language and performing role plays. Nevertheless, the participants' score abruptly decreased by 12.9%, from 18 to 15.42 points in the post-test. They might have obtained this score as the result of what taking a test implies: nervousness, lack of confidence and anxiety by being observed and, in the case of this study, the fact that the post-test was. When being tested and audio recorded, one could notice that the participants showed these reactions or feelings, and this could have influenced their final performance in the post-test.

The final activity of the treatment required the creation of a short video by the participants in which they were asked to act and perform their own stories without reading any scripts. Five videos were filmed, and in order to score them, a rubric was used to



mark five main parameters over 4 points each: 1) smoothness and pace; 2) content and creativity; 3) performance; 4) mistranslations; and 5) resorting to L1. As displayed in Table 4, the results were highly satisfactory in all these parameters. The weakest skill is *smoothness and pace* with a 2.8 mean score over 4 points. This shows that students still encountered problems with expressing themselves or speaking at a conversational pace. Their speech still presented some hesitations and pauses but they did not interfere with communication and their oral performance in the video represented 70% of the score, a result that is adequate to prove the effectiveness of the treatment. It is also important to point out that the participants achieved 100% regarding the avoidance of using L1 while creating their videos. Namely, as opposed to what occurred in the role play performances where some participants still used their native language to express some ideas or words, in this final project, the use of Spanish fillers, words or expressions was never present. The reason for this may be that the students had plenty of time to film their videos and the opportunity to repeat and film the scenes more than once was allowed, something that was not possible with the role play performances. The fact that the students were able to repeat the scenes have probably allowed for a lot of practice which, in turn, improved fluency. All the five videos obtained a high score. The highest score achieved was 19/20 (95%) while the lowest was 16/20 (80%). Nevertheless, this achievement does not reflect real life situations where students do not have time to practice what they are going to say or have another go at what they were meaning to say.

During the development of drama-oriented activities, students showed great performances and a significant improvement in the role plays and video making as shown in Figure 22 and Table 4 respectively. Based on the high results obtained in the last sessions of the role plays and video making, one could have expected a high score in the post-test as well. Nonetheless, the pre-test and post-test were conducted under different circumstances, and for those reasons the score obtained in the post-test was 15.42



points. This is completely understandable; as stated previously performing in a final oral test where no rehearsing or opportunities to repeat one's answers was allowed, makes it a difficult task to perform. Plus being audio recorded and scored, generated certain feelings such as anxiety, nervousness and tension in the participants which may have influenced their final performance.

Through the analysis of the five parameters used to score fluency in the pre- and post-test, a higher performance in all of them were achieved by the experimental group. Figure 21 displays the scores obtained by the control and the experimental group in these parameters. In the pre-test, the main weaknesses observed in both groups were *smoothness* and *pace*. This means that the participants' speech was usually very slow and showed some pauses, hesitations and false starts that sometimes interfered with communication. The control group obtained 1.8/4 (45%) on these two parameters. However, the post-test mean score presented a small improvement of 10 % in *smoothness*. The score went from 1.8 to 2.2 points that is to say from 45% to 55%, a result that is still far from the target. With regard to *pace*, the score went up by 12.5 %, that is to say from 1.8 (45%) to 2.3 (57.5%). A slightly higher improvement on these two parameters was achieved by the experimental group whose score went up from 51.8% to 70%. This constitutes an 18.2% improvement from 2.07 to 2.8 points; a result that is better than that of the control group regarding *smoothness*. The difference in the progress between the two groups was 8.3%. Regarding *pace*, the experimental group's score was much higher than that of the control group. The score increased from 2.03 (50.8 %) to 3.2 (80 %). This means that a 29.2 % improvement was achieved in this group, which is 16.7 % higher than the percentage rate for the control group. These results suggest that carrying out drama-oriented activities is useful for the improvement of fluency skills and can help students to express themselves more smoothly and at an acceptable



conversational pace. The pauses and hesitations that were frequent in the pre-test, were reduced in the post-test and did not cause interference with communication.

As shown in Figure 21, the highest score that the control group obtained in this rubric was in the *mistranslations* parameter obtaining 3.1 over 4 points while the experimental group obtained the highest score in the *resorting to L1* section – 3.9/4. This result represents an almost perfect score and may imply that while the control group's best skill was avoiding the use of mistranslated words from their native language, the experimental group was better at totally avoiding the use of L1, something that was still present in the control group. This is a great achievement, since the use of the students' mother tongue was frequently present in class, in the role play performances as well as in the pre-test. In the pre-test, it was very common to hear students thinking out loud in Spanish, asking questions or even answering them in Spanish; however, this obstacle was almost completely overcome by the experimental group.

Let us now review in which parameter the groups showed more progress. The experimental group achieved the greatest improvement on *pace* and *resorting to L1*; the scores went from 2.03 to 3.2 and from 2.7 to 3, 9 respectively in these aspects. It means that the scores increased by approximately 30% in both parameters. 1. As for the control group, the (highest) biggest progress made was on *coherence*: from 2.07 to 2, 8 points (51.8% to 70%), i.e. there was an 18.2% increase. This means that the improvement made by the experimental group was 11.8% higher than that of the Control group. These outcomes reveal that while the participants in the control group learned to express themselves in a more coherent way, at the end of the treatment, students in the experimental group overcame the slowness that was present in their speech, gained more confidence with the language, and were able to express their ideas and thoughts at a satisfactory conversational pace avoiding almost completely the use of their mother



tongue. To sum up the results, it can be concluded that the experimental group ended up superior to the control group in all aspects.

To conclude, let us look at the results obtained by the final questionnaire (see Annex 10) administered to the experimental group in order to find out the protagonists' opinions, feelings and attitudes towards the use of drama-oriented activities in the classroom. This questionnaire was designed with closed and open questions in order to obtain relevant information. As shown in Figure 24, most of the participants responded that they enjoyed all the activities very much because they were fun and different from the ordinary classes they usually had in previous levels. The only student who said that she/he did not enjoy these activities stated that this was because s/he felt s/he was not good at acting or performing in front of others. In Question 2, as displayed in Figure 25, most students stated that they felt very motivated during the classes, because they knew that they were going to have fun rehearsing and performing the role plays in class and laugh about their friends' presentations. The two students who said that they were not very motivated during class explained that this was because they felt anxious and apprehensive about the rehearsals and the performances, first and foremost because of their shy personality which made it difficult for them to perform in front of others.

In Question 3, participants said that the activities they enjoyed the most were the *Role plays* and *Video creation* because during these activities they made new friends, worked on their imagination and creativity and had a lot of fun. The activity they enjoyed the least was *drama games* because there were only a few of these activities and since they were done at the beginning of the intervention, they could not remember them well. They also admitted that, initially, they did not feel very confident with their classmates and the language they were expected to use. In Question 5, participants were asked if they perceived any benefits coming from the use of drama-oriented activities. As shown in



Figure 28, 24 of the 26 participants answered *yes* while 2 of them answered *no*. In the open-ended question section, where they were asked to justify their answers, 24 students stated that the main benefits they obtained were the following: they 1) improved their pronunciation; 2) learnt new vocabulary; 3) employed their imagination and creativity; 4) made new friends; 5) gained confidence with the language and themselves; 6) improved their fluency; 7) lost the fear to speak and perform in public; and 8) liked English as a subject.

These opinions represent significant outcomes for this research, since besides improving oral fluency skills, which was the aim of this study, the students also felt and reasoned that they obtained other important benefits beyond language learning. One of the 2 students who expressed not having obtained any benefit from this study did not answer the open section to explain his/her choice, while the other student stated that the use of these activities was not beneficial for him/her because he/she does not like performing in front of others and he/she does not like English very much and probably he/she is not going to use it in his/her future. In Question 6, the participants were asked if they would like to be part of these kinds of activities again. The answer to this question was positive; nineteen students answered *yes*, 5 *maybe*, and 2 *no* (see Figure 29). The ones whose answer was *yes* stated that they would like to have these kinds of activities in class again because they were interesting, different and fun. The participants that said *no*, stated that they prefer regular classes that do not include so much acting or performances in front of others. Finally, in the last question, students were asked to give any further opinion or suggestion about these kinds of activities, the teacher or the subject in general. Most students left this section blank, while others stated that they would have liked to have more time to rehearse certain role plays and be provided with some equipment or facilities at the university to film their final video.





From all these outcomes, it can be concluded that the use of drama-oriented activities was beneficial for most of the experimental group participants who, at the end of the intervention stage, demonstrated improving their oral fluency skills and obtained (a) much higher results than the control group. In addition, students showed positive feelings and attitudes towards these kinds of activities and the English language itself. They expressed having improved not only their English fluency skills but also some of their personality traits, such as shyness or the fear of speaking in front of others. Moreover, the group work students participated in during each session provided them with the opportunity to make new friends and get to know all the people in the class. Another important benefit is that participants were able to resort to their imagination and creativity; something that does not usually occur in some regular classes. Finally, drama-oriented activities provided a lot of fun for or in the class which made it an enjoyable environment in which to work.



## **CHAPTER IV**

### **CONCLUSIONS, CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **1. Conclusions**

The application of drama-oriented activities was used in order to evaluate if drama-oriented activities increased oral fluency skills in university students at Politécnica Salesiana University. The principal objective of this study was to introduce the use of drama-oriented activities in the classroom in order to boost five main aspects regarding oral fluency skills such as smoothness, pace, coherence and content, and the decrease or elimination of mistranslations and the use of students' native language in their speech.

This research tested the following hypothesis: the use of drama-oriented activities in university students will enhance their oral fluency skills. In order to prove this hypothesis, an oral pre-test and post-test to score oral fluency was administrated to two groups: the experimental group which received the treatment, and the control group which did not. It is important to note that before the intervention was carried out, both groups had similar fluency scores. Then, the results of both groups in each test were analyzed and compared in order to evaluate if there was a change in oral fluency of the participants who received the treatment in comparison with the ones who did not. In this context, it was observed that the experimental group reached higher scores in all the five aspects or parameters regarding fluency mentioned above. Thus, the research hypothesis was proved right. The experimental group which was part of different drama-oriented activities such as drama games, dialogues, role plays and the creation of their own video, was superior to the control group in the post-test; a result that revealed that the use of drama was useful to enhance fluency skills in the classroom. The impact of drama-oriented activities was verified by answering the research question inquiring into what extent the use of these



activities can enhance fluency abilities of university students in an EFL classroom. By comparing the pre-test and post-test mean scores in both groups, it can be concluded that the experimental students' oral fluency skills were enhanced to an adequate extent. The pre-test and post-test were scored over 20 points which was the target of the intervention. The analysis of the experimental participants' progress showed that the pre-test mean score was 11.96 while the post-test mean score was 15.42. This group's oral fluency skills went up by 17.3% while the participants of the control group obtained 11.38 in the pre-test and 13.38 in the post-test. This group's oral fluency skills went up by 10%. Thus, these results showed that the experimental group was superior to the control one by 7.3%.

Through the analysis of the five aspects or parameters used to score oral fluency in the pre- and post-test, it was observed that the participants of the experimental group obtained higher scores in all of them. The highest score achieved by the group was in the parameter *resorting to L1* where students obtained 3.9/4 points. This means that at the end of the intervention stage the participants showed confidence with the language and were able to express their ideas and thoughts without having to resort to their mother tongue. This was a great achievement for the group and for me as the teacher and researcher. These problems were present in the pre-test performances and during the intervention stage sessions; however, in the post-test, the students were able to express themselves without any evident use of their mother tongue.

The lowest score obtained on these parameters was in *smoothness* where students' score was 2.8/4. Based on this result, it can be concluded that students' main weakness is the ability to speak smoothly with no pauses or hesitations. This may happen due to the difficulty students have to process thoughts and ideas in English. They usually tend to translate everything they hear in order to formulate a statement or response; thus their speech still has some pauses and hesitations. Plus, the nervousness and anxiety that



taking an oral test implies may have caused these problems. However, the score obtained in this parameter was acceptable and was not very far from the target.

Another significant achievement of this work answers the second research question: What benefits do the participants obtain from the use of drama oriented activities in the classroom regarding oral fluency skills? Besides the benefits in speaking development as mentioned previously, the use of drama benefited the students in several other ways. During the first sessions of the intervention stage, namely, the application of drama games, it was observed that the participants were involved in active and fun activities which implied having to move around the classroom and thus get to know each other and gain confidence in the classroom. In addition, what was mentioned in the literature of this study was proved right; these drama games enabled students to feel in a relaxed and uninhibited state which allowed them to learn the language in a more receptive way (Maley and Duff 38). This was illustrated through continuous classroom observations, and by comparing my experimental students' attitudes with the ones of the control group. The experimental group participants showed more positive attitudes towards the language than the participants of the control group. In addition, the participants expressed in question 5 of the final questionnaire (see Annex 10) that they felt more relaxed during class as one of the various benefits they obtained from the use of drama.

The major benefits the students obtained during the intervention stage were observed in the application of role play. At the end of the experiment, the participants showed an increased motivation to learn the language. It was really noticeable how the students came to class smiling and willing to learn. In fact, many of them, frequently asked me with enthusiasm "Teacher what topic are we going to have today for our role plays?" They showed interest and excitement in the class as they knew they were going to learn, speak and laugh; they laughed a lot during the sessions since many of the participants included



humor in their performances. I have not seen such enthusiasm in my classes before but due to the use of role play it was possible. In addition, in the final questionnaire administered to students, most of them expressed they really enjoyed these kinds of activities and felt very motivated during class (see Annex 10).

Question 5 of the final questionnaire, (see Annex 10), contained an open section where the participants had the opportunity to write which benefits (if any) they think they obtained from drama. To this question, most of the participants stated that the use of drama-oriented activities helped them to:

- Enhance their imagination and creativity
- Gain confidence with the language and with themselves.
- Feel more relaxed in class
- Improve their vocabulary
- Make more friends
- Like and enjoy learning English
- Feel motivated in class
- Speak more
- Improve their pronunciation
- Show their acting abilities, among others.

In this section, students mentioned what coincides with what was stated in the literature of this study, that is, drama is useful in enhancing confidence, creating motivation, (Taylor 1-2) and enhancing learners' speaking abilities, and building individual skills for students (Kalidas 446). For instance, some of these individual skills may include the ability to speak in public, overcoming shyness and the demonstration of some participants' hidden talents at acting and making jokes. Furthermore, it was observed that the use of drama-oriented activities was effective in promoting cooperative learning as the participants worked in pairs or groups which ended up in friendship most of the time as stated by some students. Finally the chances to speak in class also increased through group work as suggested by Long and Porter (qtd. in Gill 30).

Finally, during the last activity of the intervention stage, namely, the short film creation, it was observed that the learners were able to build problem solving skills as they had to create their own scripts and film their stories. In addition, in the final questionnaire, the participants expressed having enjoyed this activity (see Annex 10). This was reflected in the high scores the groups obtained in the films creation 17.4/20 (87%) (See Table 4).

When observing the participants' videos, it was perceived that most of the students gained a lot of confidence with the language and with themselves. Some shy learners overcame that problem and were able to perform smoothly. All the groups were very creative in making up their stories; some of them even included humor, thriller, and action genres or content. As the teacher and researcher, I felt really rewarded with their final project which showed not only a satisfactory oral performance but also a display of creativity, imagination and video editing.

To sum up, the use of drama-oriented activities was shown to be really effective not only in enhancing speaking skills in the students but also in building their individual skills, increasing their motivation and confidence, and learning the language in a more interactive and entertaining way.

## **2. Constraints and Recommendations**

From my point of view as a researcher and teacher, I consider that the most important aspects to be taken into account for further investigation have to do with the measurements used to score fluency in the pre-test and post-test, time constraints, group arrangement and classroom organization and setting.

As mentioned before, the aim of this research was to enhance students' oral fluency through the use of drama-oriented activities. In order to score students' fluency, a rubric based on 5 parameters was used; 1) smoothness, 2) pace, 3) coherence, 4)



mistranslations, and 5) resorting to L1 (see Annex 6). However, these parameters are somewhat subjective. For this reason, my recommendation for further investigation is to find more objective, accurate and reliable measurements such as the ones proposed by some authors in the Literature of this study, namely, Segalowitz (6), Wood (14), Klammer (9), ND Jong (538) and Kormos and Dénes (6) who conclude that the best temporal variables to predict fluency are 1) speech rate, 2) articulation rate, 3) phonation-time ratio, 4) mean length of runs, 5) the number of silent pauses per minute, 6) the mean length of pauses, 7) the number of filled pauses per minute, 8) the number of disfluencies per minute, 9) pace, 10) space.

It was difficult for me to use these measurements since they require expertise and the use of specific programs which were not available on the internet for me. For this reason, I decided to create a rubric to score fluency. Nonetheless, I am convinced that with more time and with the appropriate program, the 10 temporal variables suggested by the authors mentioned above, would be more objective and accurate predictors of fluency.

Another important aspect to be considered is the time constraints. Juggling between applying the treatment to the group and having to cover the units required by the institute in order to obtain scores to promote students to the next level, implied a great effort and required lots of time. My suggestion is to apply the use of drama-oriented activities in a period longer than a semester, and focus on the treatment application only, without any other extra activities. Thus, the researcher would be able to obtain better and more accurate results. In addition, I am convinced that with more time for the intervention stage, the students could have improved their scores in the post-test and obtained a better mark in the parameters *smoothness* and *pace* which registered the lowest scores of all the 5 used to score fluency.



During the treatment, the students worked in pairs or groups which motivated them to use the language interactively, solve problems and socialize. However, some constraints I encountered during the application of role plays were specifically in the arrangement of groups. At the beginning of the treatment, the students were organized in groups by means of some strategies such as numbering the participants and group them according to the number assigned, or through a game. But later on, due to time limitations, the students were free to form their own groups as pleased. This occasionally resulted in unequal groups: some groups were stronger than others and had less difficulty to perform the activities. For this reason, my recommendation for further research studies is to figure out the best way to group students in order to avoid weaker groups. An option could be to include mixed ability groups which can improve the learners' performance when working with participants of different levels.

Finally, the use of role plays sometimes caused certain problems such as an unsuitable classroom organization and high noise levels. For this reason, my recommendation is to create a respectful environment in the class or apply the use of role plays in a place or classroom where the noise does not disturb other classes. Sometimes a big space was necessary for the role plays performances so the chairs and desks were moved out the way, for this reason, a big classroom would be suitable to work with role plays. Another constraint I encountered was the external noise in the classroom as it was located near a street where the noise coming from the cars passing by or their honks affected the classroom environment. The role play performances were filmed for further observation. However, when checking them, the external noise plus some students' low pitch of voice affected the understanding of the students' speech in the videos. For these reasons, I suggest to carrying out role plays in a quiet classroom where the external noise does not disturb the class environment and the video filming. In addition, some technology





such as microphones or speakers might be included in the students' performances in order to avoid unintelligible speech due to noise factors or students' low pitch of voice.

In summary, as a teacher and researcher I am totally convinced that the use of drama-oriented activities has been really useful in enhancing speaking skills in EFL students, and that the current research study has made an important contribution to foreign language learning. The main contribution when using drama-oriented activities in an EFL classroom was to help students become more confident with the language and improve their oral skills, especially fluency. For these reasons, I highly recommend the use of drama-oriented activities to any institution, researcher or teacher interested in enhancing fluency and general speaking abilities as well as building students' individual skills.



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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Informed Consent form for University Authorities

Cuenca 10 de marzo de 2013

Lcda. Victoria Jara  
Directora del Departamento de Idiomas  
Universidad Politécnica Salesiana  
Ciudad

Yo, Andrea Belén Chérrez Sacoto, docente de inglés en esta prestigiosa institución, solicito a usted de la manera más comedida se me permita realizar mi proyecto de tesis “The Use of Drama-oriented Activities to Improve Oral Fluency in an EFL classroom at Politécnica Salesiana University”. Mi trabajo de tesis se enfoca en la mejora de la fluidez oral de los alumnos por medio del uso de actividades basadas en el drama y teatro durante este semestre, el mismo que será aplicado a los estudiantes del nivel 2 grupo 14 de esta institución.

Tengo la firme convicción de que este estudio será de gran utilidad para el área de Inglés, ya que con el mismo se busca una mejora de las habilidades orales de los estudiantes que muchas veces se encuentran olvidadas debido al uso de métodos tradicionales de enseñanza.

Por la favorable atención a la presente, anticipo mi sincero agradecimiento.

Atentamente,

Lcda. Andrea Chérrez

Adjunto el diseño de tesis aprobado así como la carta de consentimiento para los alumnos y el modelo de planificación que se llevará a cabo.



## **Annex 2: Informed Consent form for Students**

Cuenca, 19 de marzo de 2013

Señor(ita)  
Estudiante del grupo 13 nivel 2 de inglés  
De la Universidad Politécnica Salesiana  
Ciudad

De mis consideraciones:

En calidad de docente de inglés de la prestigiosa institución donde usted estudia y como estudiante del programa de Maestría de Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada de la Universidad de Cuenca, me permito por medio de la presente, pedirle su autorización para formar parte de un estudio educativo, el cual tiene como fundamento mejorar la enseñanza del idioma inglés a través de dialogues y actuación con el fin de desarrollar la fluidez oral del idioma.

Los objetivos principales de este estudio son el perfeccionamiento de la destreza oral; así como también la aplicación de los conocimientos adquiridos en la vida real de los estudiantes.

Si está de acuerdo en participar en este proyecto, usted será requerido a formar parte de las siguientes actividades:

- Pre-test y post-test
- Desarrollo y presentación oral de diálogos y dramatizaciones.
- Responder a una encuesta.
- Ser observados y filmados durante la aplicación y duración del proyecto.
- Asistir a las sesiones requeridas para el cumplimiento del proyecto.

Cabe mencionar que su identidad será protegida y la información obtenida en relación con este estudio que podría identificarlo será guardada con estricta confidencialidad.

Cualquier pregunta de este estudio podrá ser dirigida a mi persona a través del email [angybela25@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:angybela25@yahoo.com.ar), al teléfono 0984321139, al email de la directora de la maestría [catalina.astudillon@ucuenca.edu.ec](mailto:catalina.astudillon@ucuenca.edu.ec), o directamente con las autoridades del plantel.

Por la atención prestada a la presente me despido, agradeciéndole de antemano por su inmensa y valiosa colaboración.



Atentamente,

Lcda. Andrea Chérrez

PD: Su firma y la de su representado da la validez al consentimiento de su participación en este estudio y el conocimiento de la información que se ha explicado en esta carta.

Firma del Representante

.....

Nombres: .....

C.I: .....

Teléfono: .....

E-mail: .....



### Annex 3: Preliminary Questionnaire

#### Research Instrument-Preliminary Questionnaire

Los datos recogidos en esta encuesta gozan de absoluta CONFIDENCIALIDAD. Se agradece por su cooperación y veracidad al llenar la misma.

1. **Edad:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Género:** Femenino \_\_\_\_\_ Masculino \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Escoja el número de años que ha estudiado el idioma inglés.**

1 a 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 a 5 \_\_\_\_\_ 5 a 10 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 a 15 \_\_\_\_\_ 15 o más \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Elija 3 aspectos que considera los importantes en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés.**

- a) Listening \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Speaking \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Reading \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Writing \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Grammar \_\_\_\_\_
- f) Vocabulary \_\_\_\_\_

5. **¿Se siente usted motivado por aprender el idioma inglés?**

Si: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

**¿Por qué?:**

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6. **¿Qué tipo de actividades disfruta más en clases de inglés? Escoja 2.**

- 1. Games \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Role Play \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Speaking \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Reading \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Writing \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. Songs \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. Debates \_\_\_\_\_

7. **¿Cree usted que el idioma inglés es o será una herramienta útil para su vida?**

Si: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_



**8. ¿Cuán difícil le resulta exponer sus ideas o puntos de vista utilizando el idioma inglés?**

Un poco: \_\_\_\_\_ Más o menos: \_\_\_\_\_ Mucho: \_\_\_\_\_

**9. ¿Ha participado alguna vez en “Role Plays” (juego de roles) en clases de inglés?**

Si: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. En caso de que su respuesta haya sido afirmativa en la pregunta anterior. ¿Disfrutó usted al ser parte de este tipo de actividad?**

Si: \_\_\_\_\_ No: \_\_\_\_\_

¿Por qué?

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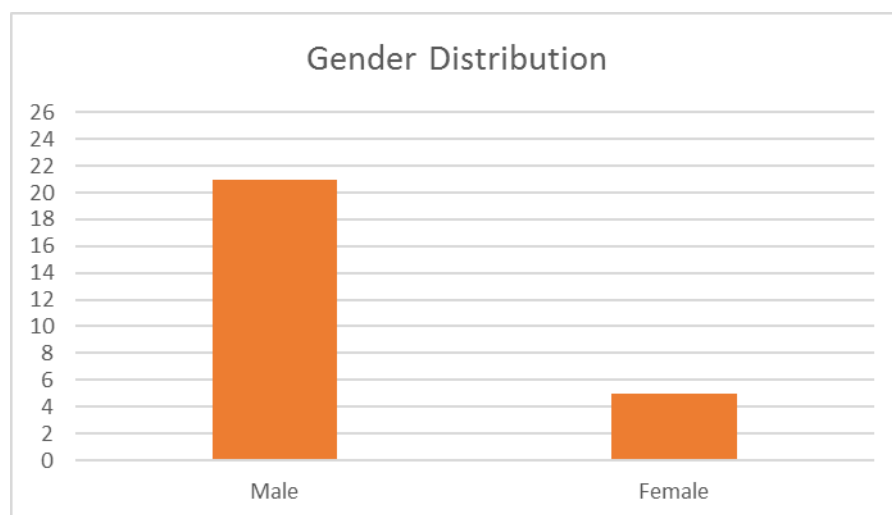
**¡Muchas gracias por su colaboración!**

## Preliminary Questionnaire Analysis

A preliminary questionnaire was administered in order to find out the participants' background information. This questionnaire was designed with two sections. The first part intended to recollect information about the participants' gender, age, and the time experiencing EFL learning. The second section asked the participants about important aspects of the language learning process.

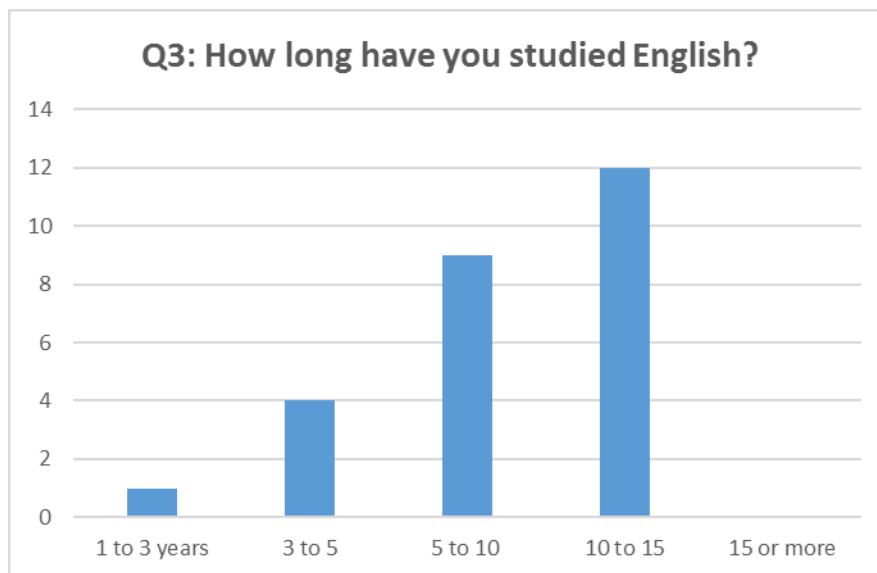
The experimental group was formed by 26 student whose ages range from 18-23.

The following figure displays the gender distribution of the experimental group.



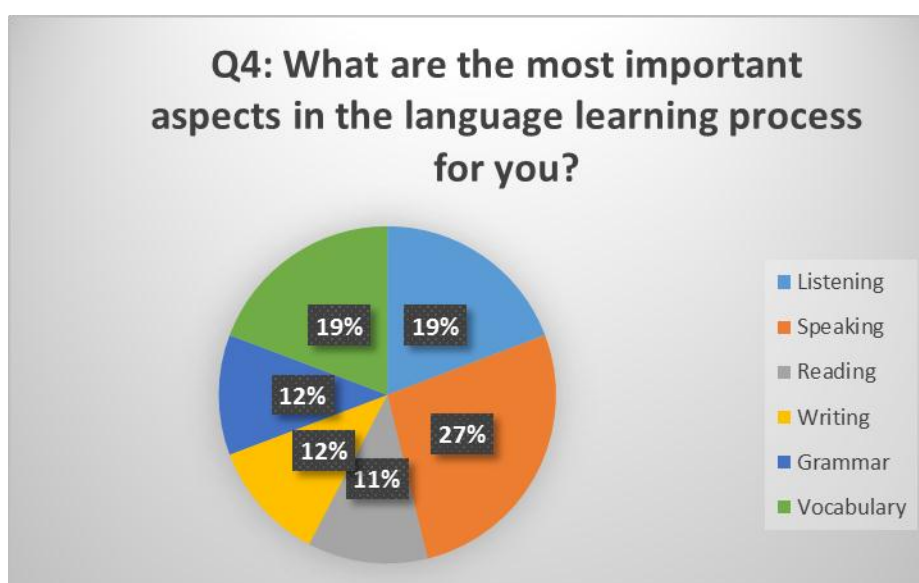
**Figure 30: Gender distribution.**

As shown in Figure 30, the experimental group was formed by 5 female and 21 male students. The reason why the majority of the participants were male is because the university offers engineering majors which are chosen by males mainly.



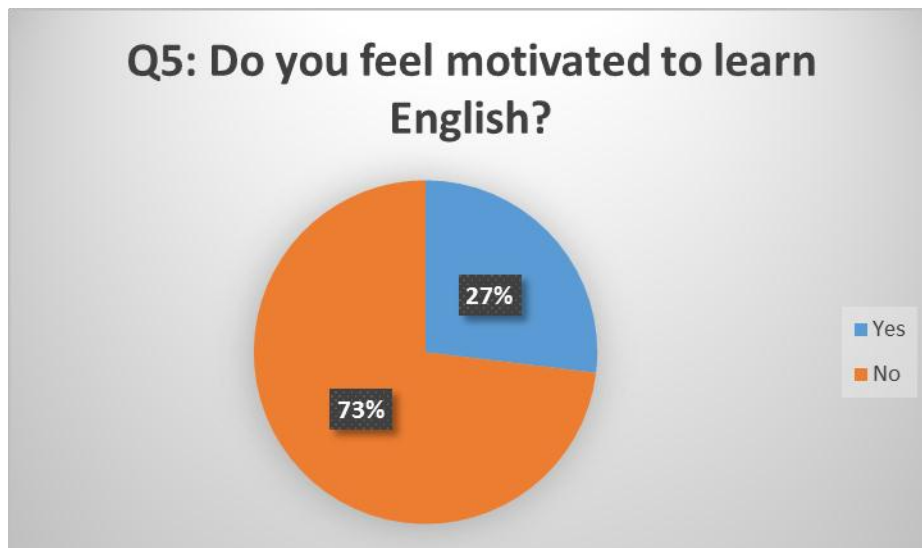
**Figure 31: Number of years studying English.**

Figure 31 shows the number of years students have studied English. One student stated he or she studied the language from 1 to 3 years. Four students from 3 to 5 years. Nine participants from 5 to 10 years and 12 learners stated they have studied English from 10 to 15 years. Finally, none stated they have studied the language for more than 15 years. This data shows that most students have studied English for many years. However, many students have problems when communicating their ideas and thoughts using the language.



**Figure 32: The most important aspects when learning English.**

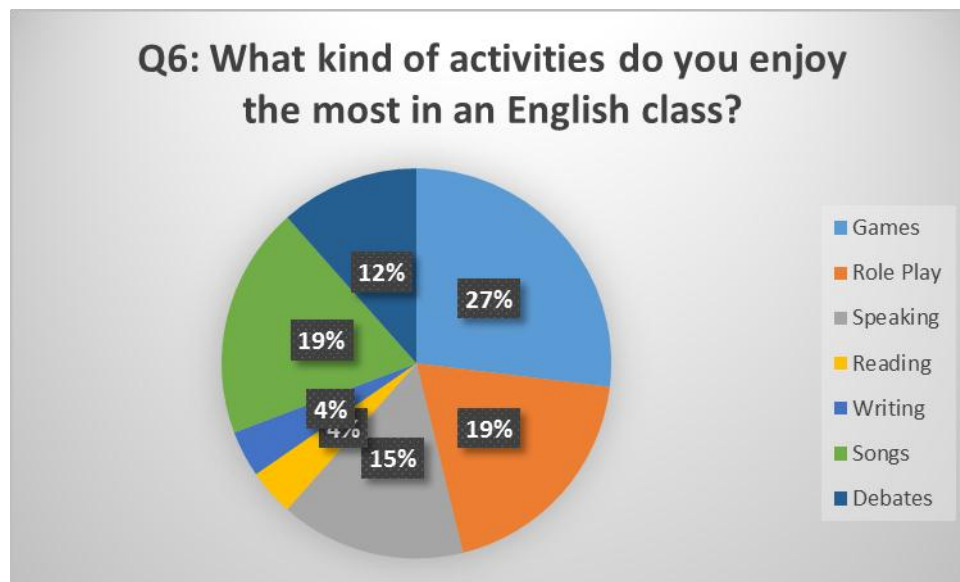
Figure 32 displays the aspects that the participants consider the most important when learning English. For most students the most important aspects in the language learning process are Speaking (27%), Vocabulary (19%) and Listening (19%). This might mean that their main objective is to communicate with others orally and be able to do it with a wide range of vocabulary and understanding.



**Figure 33: How motivated students are to learn English.**

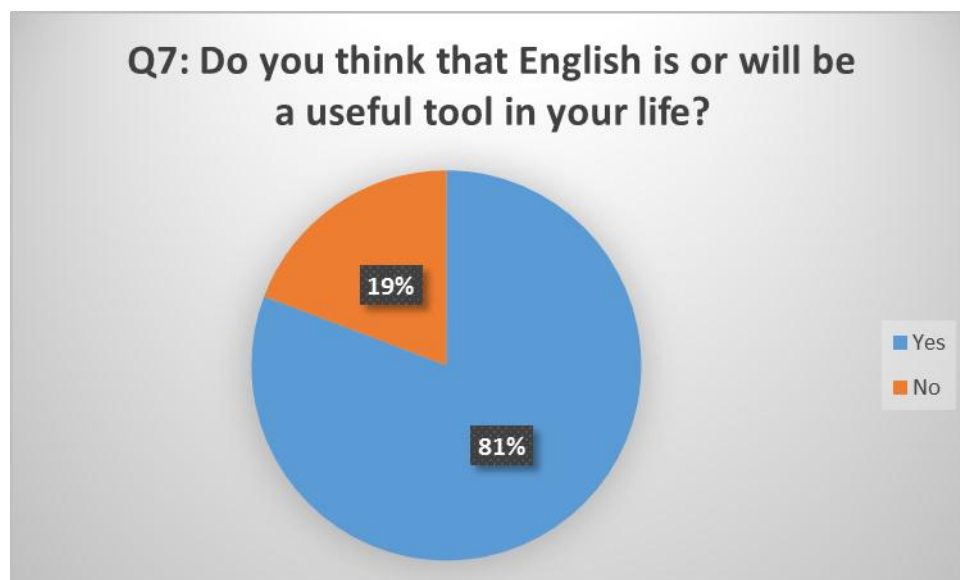
Figure 33 shows how motivated students feel to learn English. Most students (73%) stated that they do not feel motivated to learn the language. In the open section of this question inquiring into why they feel motivated or not to learn English, most participants answered that the main reason is because they feel that studying English is a requirement by the university and that most of the English classes they have taken before have been boring or difficult.





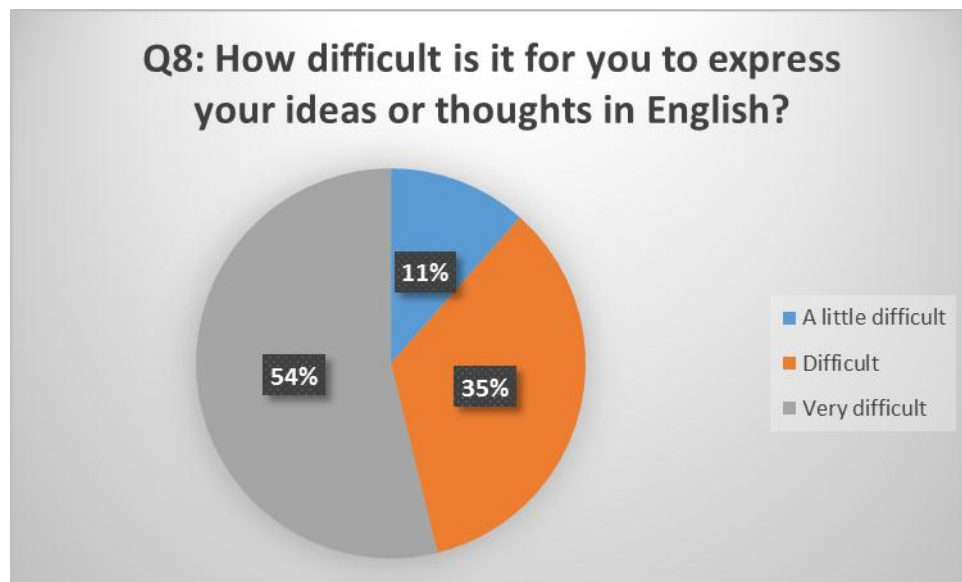
**Figure 34: What kind of activities the students enjoy the most.**

As displayed in Figure 34, the participants stated that the activities they enjoy the most in an English class are Games (27%), Role Play (19%) and Songs (19%), and the activities they enjoy the least are Writing (4%), Reading (4%) and Debates (12%). This shows us that students enjoy being part of interactive and fun activities in class.



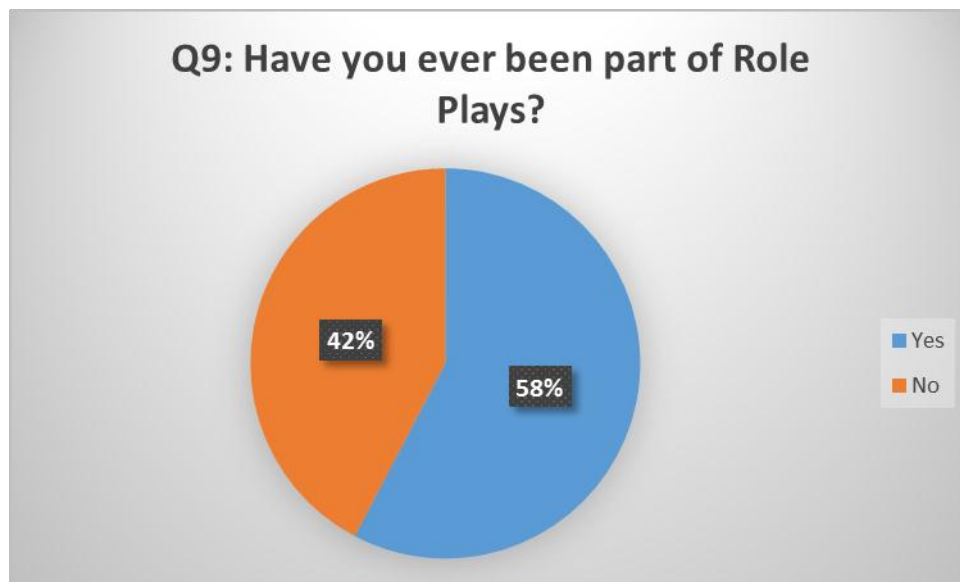
**Figure 35: Do students consider that English is or will be a useful tool in their lives?**

As shown in Figure 35, the majority of the participants think that English is or will be a useful tool in their lives. This tells us that although many students do not like or feel motivated to learn English, they are aware that learning English can be useful for their lives.



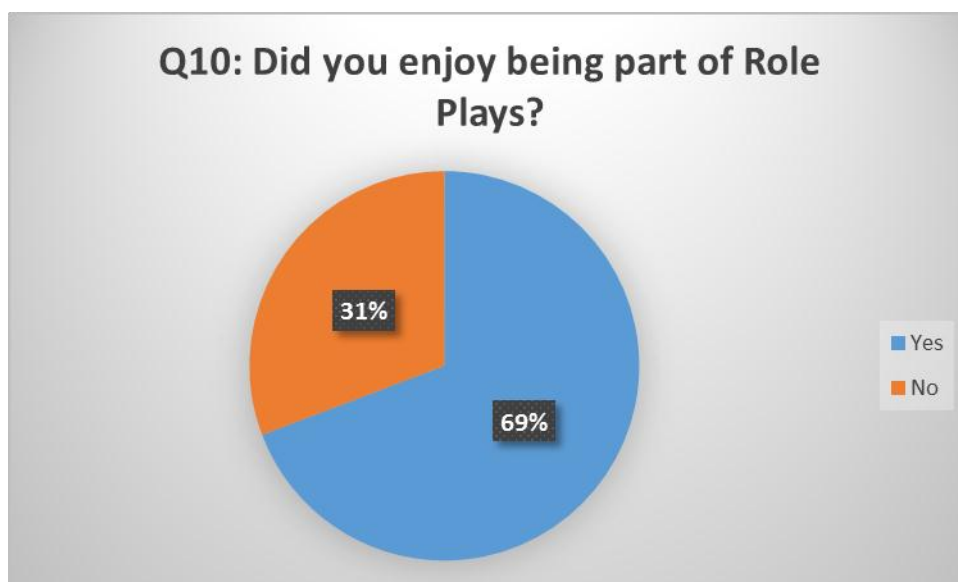
**Figure 36: How difficult is for students to express their ideas or thoughts in English.**

In question 8 inquiring into how difficult is for students to express their ideas or thoughts in English, as displayed in Figure 36, most participants (54%) stated that it is very difficult, 35% difficult, and 11% answered it is a little difficult. This data reveals that most students find it very difficult to express themselves using the language. For this reason the use of drama-oriented activities sought to help participants feel more confident with the language and thus express themselves smoothly.



**Figure 37: Have students ever been part of Role Plays?**

In question 9 asking about students' experiences with role plays, 58% of the class stated to have been part of role plays while 42% affirmed they have never been part of role plays before as displayed in Figure 37.



**Figure 38: Did students enjoy being part of Role Plays?**



As shown in Figure 38, 69% of the participants who stated that have been part of role play in the previous question, answered that they enjoyed being part of this kind of activity while the 31% expressed they did not enjoy role play.

From this preliminary questionnaire it can be concluded that most of the students do not feel very motivated to learn English; however they are aware of the importance of learning the language. Most of them have stated to have studied English for many years; nonetheless they feel they are not able to express their ideas smoothly. In addition, it seems that the participants enjoy being part of interactive activities such as songs, games and role play during class. Thus, the use of drama-oriented activities becomes a meaningful tool to enhance speaking skill as well as provide fun, interactive and enjoyable activities in the class



## Annex 4: Pre-test / Post-test – Bank of Questions

### PART 1 (Interview)

In the first part of the exam, the interviewer will ask you and your partner several questions about everyday topics. Here is a list of questions arranged by topic:

#### Personal Information

1. What's your name?
2. How do you spell your name?
3. Where are you from?
4. How old are you?
5. What do you do?
6. Where do you work or study?

#### Area where you live or used to live

1. Where were you born?
2. Describe the city where you were born?
3. Where do you live now?
4. What is your favorite part about the city where you live in?
5. Describe your country

#### Sports

1. Are you interested in sports?
2. What's your favorite sport or fitness activity?
3. How often do you practice sports?
4. What do you usually do to stay in shape?
5. Who do you exercise with?
6. Where do you usually exercise?

#### Leisure

1. How much TV do you watch in a week?
2. What's your favorite TV program? What is it about?
3. What do you like to do in your free time?
4. Do you enjoy reading?
5. What kind of books do you read?
6. What's your favorite book?
7. Who do you spend your free time with?

#### Work and study

1. Where do you study?
2. What do you study?
3. Do you like English? Why? Or Why not?
4. Describe your university.
5. Do you work? Where do you work?
6. Describe your job
7. What would you like to be in the future?

#### Family and friends

1. Do you come from a big family?
2. How many brothers and sisters do you have?
3. Do you have nephews or nieces?

4. Describe your family
5. What does your father do?
6. How old is your sister?
7. Who are the most important people in your life?
8. Tell me about your best friend.
9. What activities do you usually do with your family? Friends?
10. Do you prefer to spend time with your family or your friends?

#### Travel and holidays

1. Have you ever used your English on holiday?
2. Where would you really like to go on holiday in the future?
3. Do you like to plan your holidays carefully or do you prefer to just go?
4. How do you prefer to travel? by bus or by plane?
5. What's public transport like in your country?

#### Entertainment

1. Do you ever go to concerts?
2. Where do you like listening to music?
3. Do you like going to the cinema?
4. Do you enjoy playing computer games?
5. Do you enjoy shopping?
6. Do you like going to parties?

#### Daily life

1. How much time do you spend at home?
2. Tell us about a day you've really enjoyed recently?
3. Do you like cooking?
4. What's your favorite food?
5. Have you got any plans for this weekend?
6. What's your favorite day of the week?
7. Are you planning to do anything special this weekend?
8. What's your favorite part of the day?

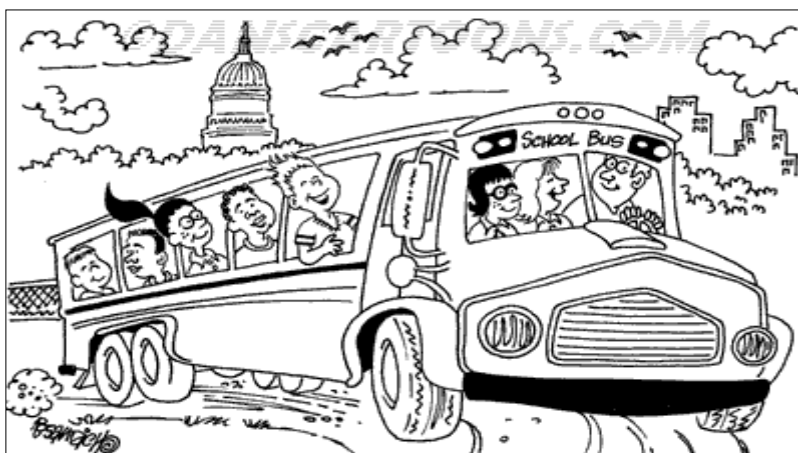
## KET SPEAKING PART 2

**Student A**

**This Saturday**

**Class 2**

### TRIP TO CAJAS NATIONAL PARK



Get the bus outside the university campus

Leave: 10am

Return: 5pm

**Don't forget to bring**

Snacks, drinks, notebooks and pens

***Free lunch for everybody!***

## KET SPEAKING PART 2

### Student B

#### UNIVERSITY TRIP

• Where / trip ?

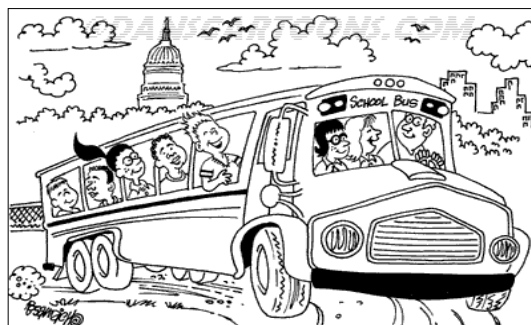
• day ?

• transportation ?

• leave ?  ?

• return  ? ?

• What / bring ?



## KET SPEKING PART 2

### Student A

#### WEBSHACK INTERNET CAFÉ

Main Street and Fifth Avenue

Surf the Internet,

Play games,

Send emails,

Copies,

Printings

1\$ per hour

15 computers

Hot and cold drinks and snacks

Open 9am - 8pm






## KET SPEKING PART 2

2

### Student B

#### INTERNET CAFÉ

- Where?
- services?
- cost ?
- How many / computers ?
- sell / food?
- open ?  ?



**KET SPEKING PART 2**

3

**Student A****AMERICAN COLLEGE**

From next Monday,  
our new English and French teacher  
is

**MS JANE COOPER**

from Canada



**She wants to have a speaking club after class  
from 3 to 5pm**

**KET SPEKING PART 2**

3

**Student B****NEW TEACHER**

- name ?
- When / start ?
- What / teach ?
- Where / from ?
- teach / club ?
- What time / club?



## KET SPEKING PART 2

4

### Student A

#### **ATOMIC THEATER Presents**

**FAST AND FURIOUS 6**  
(cars and speed)

with Vin Diesel and Paul Walker

7pm

10 \$ per person

snacks, drinks and sweets



## KET SPEAKING PART 2

4

### Student B

#### NEW MOVIE

- Name ?
- What / about ?
- Who / actors ?
- Where ?
- Time ?
- Cost ? \$ ?





## Annex 6: Oral Fluency Rubric

### ORAL FLUENCY RUBRIC

ASPECTS	HAS NOT STARTED THE PROCESS YET (0)	NEEDS HELP IN PROCESS (1)	IN PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING (2)	ALMOST SATISFACTORY PROCESS (3)	SATISFACTORY PROCESS (4)
<b>SMOOTHNESS</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate speaks with frequent and extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts, which often interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks with some pauses, hesitations, false starts and sound outs, which sometimes interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks with a few hesitation or pauses, but they do not usually interfere with communication.	The candidate is able to express his/her ideas smoothly without or with minimal hesitations or pauses that do not interfere with communication.
<b>PACE</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate speaks so slowly and laboriously that is hard to understand.	The candidate speaks moderately slowly.	The candidate speaks at a consistent medium pace; not too slow and not too fast throughout the test.	The candidate speaks at a conversational pace.
<b>COHERENCE And AMOUNT OF SPEECH</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate's answers have nothing to do with the questions or topic of conversation, and/or utters almost no words.	The candidate is able to express his/her own ideas using a few words or sentences and it takes him/her some time to do it.	The candidate agrees with all ideas expressed by his/her interlocutor and expresses his/her ideas using many sentences.	The candidate shows logical thoughts that agree with the main topic of the conversation or questions, and uses a wide range of words and sentences.
<b>MISTRANSLATIONS</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate speaks with frequent and multiple mistranslations, which interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks with some mistranslations that sometimes interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks with a few mistranslations, but they not usually interfere with communication.	The candidate is able to convey his/her message without evident use of mistranslations.
<b>RESORT TO L1</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate frequently speaks using L1 to express his/her ideas, and/or uses frequent and/or multiple L1 fillers.	The candidate often speaks words in L1 to express his/her ideas, and/or uses some L1 fillers.	The candidate barely uses L1 to express his/her ideas, and uses a few L1 fillers.	The candidate is able to convey his/her message without evident resort to L1.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Final score: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annex 7: Lesson Plan Sample****APPLICATION PLANNING 1**

**Department:** English  
**year:**

**School**

**Teacher:** Lcda. Andrea Chérrez  
**Grade:**

**Date:** March 21st

TOPIC	DEVELOPMENT	OBJECTIVES	TIME
Registering at an English club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask students to work in pairs and perform the role play with 2 characters: 1) a receptionist and 2) a club member.</li><li>• Have students pretend they are going to register at an English club offering different options to choose from (listening, speaking, reading, writing, singing and cooking club among others).</li><li>• Have students interact with each other by asking and answering questions about personal information.</li><li>• Have students take turns to practice both roles.</li><li>• Have student perform their role play in front of the class.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhancing creativity.</li><li>• Promoting interaction.</li><li>• Providing personal information.</li><li>• Giving and asking for personal information.</li></ul>	20 minutes



## Annex 8: Role Play Rubric

### ROLE PLAY RUBRIC

ASPECTS	HAS NOT STARTED THE PROCESS YET (0)	NEEDS HELP IN PROCESS (1)	IN PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING (2)	ALMOST SATISFACTORY PROCESS (3)	SATISFACTORY PROCESS (4)
<b>SMOOTHNESS AND PACE</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate speaks so slowly and laboriously that is hard to understand, with frequent and extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts, which often interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks moderately slowly with some pauses, hesitations, false starts and sound outs, which sometimes interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks at a consistent medium pace; not too slow and not too fast throughout the test with a few hesitation or pauses, but they do not usually interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks at a conversational pace and is able to express his/her ideas smoothly without or with minimal hesitations or pauses that do not interfere with communication.
<b>CONTENT AND CREATIVITY</b>	The role play doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The role play lacks of creativity and meaningful content.	The role play content is somewhat creative.	The role play content is creative.	The role play content is meaningful and very creative.
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate's performance and body language has nothing to do with the topic of the role play.	The candidate's performance and body language is somewhat smooth and moderately agrees with topic of the role play.	The candidate's performance and body language agrees with the topic of the role play.	The candidate's performance and body language completely agrees with the topic of the role play.
<b>MISTRANSLATIONS</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate speaks with frequent and multiple mistranslations, which interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks with some mistranslations that sometimes interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks with a few mistranslations, but they not usually interfere with communication.	The candidate is able to convey his/her message without evident use of mistranslations.
<b>RESORTING TO L1</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate frequently speaks using L1 to express his/her ideas, and/or uses frequent and/or multiple L1 fillers.	The candidate often speaks words in L1 to express his/her ideas, and/or uses some L1 fillers.	The candidate barely uses L1 to express his/her ideas, and uses a few L1 fillers.	The candidate is able to convey his/her message without evident resort to L1.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Score: \_\_\_\_\_





## Annex 9: Video Rubric

### VIDEO RUBRIC

ASPECTS	HAS NOT STARTED THE PROCESS YET (0)	NEEDS HELP IN PROCESS (1)	IN PROCESS OF UNDERSTANDING (2)	ALMOST SATISFACTORY PROCESS (3)	SATISFACTORY PROCESS (4)
<b>SMOOTHNESS AND PACE</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate speaks so slowly and laboriously that is hard to understand, with frequent and extended pauses, hesitations, false starts, sound outs, repetitions, and/or multiple attempts, which often interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks moderately slowly with some pauses, hesitations, false starts and sound outs, which sometimes interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks at a consistent medium pace; not too slow and not too fast throughout the test with a few hesitation or pauses, but they do not usually interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks at a conversational pace and is able to express his/her ideas smoothly without or with minimal hesitations or pauses that do not interfere with communication.
<b>CONTENT AND CREATIVITY</b>	The role play doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The role play lacks of creativity and meaningful content.	The role play content is somewhat creative.	The role play content is creative.	The role play content is meaningful and very creative.
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate's performance and body language has nothing to do with the topic of the role play.	The candidate's performance and body language is somewhat smooth and moderately agrees with topic of the role play.	The candidate's performance and body language agrees with the topic of the role play.	The candidate's performance and body language completely agrees with the topic of the role play.
<b>MISTRANSLATIONS</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate speaks with frequent and multiple mistranslations, which interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks with some mistranslations that sometimes interfere with communication.	The candidate speaks with a few mistranslations, but they not usually interfere with communication.	The candidate is able to convey his/her message without evident use of mistranslations.
<b>RESORTING TO L1</b>	The candidate doesn't fit in any of the following descriptions.	The candidate frequently speaks using L1 to express his/her ideas, and/or uses frequent and/or multiple L1 fillers.	The candidate often speaks words in L1 to express his/her ideas, and/or uses some L1 fillers.	The candidate barely uses L1 to express his/her ideas, and uses a few L1 fillers.	The candidate is able to convey his/her message without evident resort to L1.

Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Score: \_\_\_\_\_



## Annex 10: Final Questionnaire

### FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

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PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN. TAKE YOUR TIME, READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY AND ANSWER THEM IN THE MOST HONEST WAY POSSIBLE. YOUR HONEST ANSWERS ARE REALLY VALUABLE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COLABORATION!

---

#### KEY TERMS

**Drama-oriented activities:** it refers to the activities you were part of during this semester: drama games, dialogues, role plays and videos.

---

- 1) How much did you enjoy being part of drama-oriented activities? Check ( ) your answer.

Not much ( )

Much ( )

Very Much ( )

Why?

---

---

---

- 2) How motivated did you feel during class?

Not very ( )

Motivated ( )

Very motivated ( )

)

Why?

---

---

---

- 3) Number the following drama-oriented activities from 1 to 4. Write 1 for the activity you enjoyed the most and 4 for the activity you enjoyed the least.

a) Drama games \_\_\_\_\_



- b) Dialogues \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Role Plays \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Video creation \_\_\_\_\_

Why did you mark number 1?

---

---

Why did you mark number 4?

---

---

4) How much did you enjoy each of these activities? Check ( ) your answer.

Activity	Not much	Much	Very Much
Drama games			
Dialogues			
Role Plays			
Video Creation			

5) Do you think that the use of drama-oriented activities was beneficial for your English learning?



Yes ( )

No ( )

**6) If your answer was Yes in question 5, explain what benefits you think you obtained after being part of drama-oriented activities? Write 1 to 4 benefits.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7) If your answer was No in question 5, briefly explain why drama-oriented activities were not beneficial for you.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8) Would you like to be part of drama-oriented activities in your future English classes again?**

Yes ( )

Maybe ( )

No ( )

Why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**9) If you have any suggestion or extra comment about the drama-oriented activities you were part of during this semester, please write them in this section.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THANKS FOR YOUR COLABORATION!**